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MORNING PAPERS.

SATURDAY March 6th, 1948.

Marshall plan for Egypt and the Middle East.

Under the above headline, Akhbar El Yom, the pro-government weekly, publishes a story written by its Washington correspondent, George Williams, in which he says: "I learned from a well-informed source that the Middle East would benefit in the near future from a plan similar to the Marshall plan for Europe. Although it was rumoured in the past that the Middle East might be helped by America, this is the first time the rumour has been confirmed officially. It is understood in Washington that it may be weeks or months before the U.S. government takes a definite step in this matter, but there is every indication that Washington will soon put the plan into effect.

"The official American circles are well aware that the Communist influence is increasing rapidly in some countries of the Middle East and that it will continue to increase unless something is done to check it. They also know that ignorance, poverty, and disease in the Middle East make this region a suitable place for communism to sow its seeds. They believe that no action which may be taken to combat communism is effective unless some definite steps are taken to combat poverty, ignorance, and disease first.

"Although the U.S. government asked the Congress to approve the expenditure of 16 billion dollars for the Marshall plan, it is believed that the sum of money needed to help the Middle East will only be between 2 and 3 billion dollars".

LE 100,000,000 for Egypt.

Under the above headline, Akhbar El Yom comments on the above story by saying: "Marshall plan would mean, as far as Egypt is concerned, that Egypt would get from America about LE 100,000,000 in the first year. This money will not be a loan but a gift. Egypt would receive the major part of this money in the shape of food, and agricultural and industrial machinery. A small part will be in cash.

"We contacted Nokrashi Pasha at a late hour last night to ask if he received official news from America about

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the subject. He replied that he knew nothing about it, and refused to make any comment.

Akhbar El Yom's editorial comment.

Under the headline "We and the Marshall plan", Akhbar El Yom writes: "If the U.S. State Department succeeds in drawing up and putting into effect a Marshall plan for Egypt and the Middle East, as our Washington Correspondent says, America would be doing herself, the world, and the Middle East a service.

"No doubt, Egypt and the Arab countries welcome such a plan if it is based on a desire to help them and not to exploit them. Poverty, ignorance, and disease, are the natural allies of communism and combatting these three evils is tantamount to combatting communism. We know that such a plan would be difficult to pass in the Congress, because there are some men among America's leaders who although very short-sighted are apparently so influential that they succeeded in making their government support the partition of Palestine, and reject Egypt's complaint at the Security Council. The Zionists of America will oppose any plan by Marshall for helping the Arab countries; right from the start while it is still in the cradle. They will bring pressure to bear on the American State Department to make it deny that it intends to put such a plan into effect in the Middle East.

"The Arab countries are the first line of defence between Communism and democracy. Unless this line is strong, it will collapse and democracy will collapse with it. The Middle East is in effect a victim of democracy. The policy of imperialism and exploitation led to its poverty and weakness. Democracy is tasty but cannot be digested by weak and empty stomachs.

"We do not wish to be too optimistic. Politics taught us not to believe in promises and to suspect everybody and everything. We therefore wait and see."

Yemen.

Interesting stories by Akhbar El Yom, Al Misri, and Mussamarat Al Guuib.

Under the headline: The Yemenite government threatens the League, Akhbar El Yom publishes a message received from its correspondent in Jiddah in which he says that the scouts which were sent by the Arab League to Yemen to investigate the situation there before the League sent its delegation which included Azzam Pasha and other senior Arabs, have submitted their report to Azzam Pasha at Jiddah. The Correspondent then goes on to give the following résumé of the report in question: The Sana'a government did not enable the League mission to visit the various parts of Yemen on the pretext that there was danger of attack against the members of the mission. Seif Al Haq Ibrahim was not appointed P.M. in the

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new regime, but President of the Consultative Council. The Prime Minister of the new government is Ali Ibn Abdullah Al Wazoor, cousin of the new Imam, and he already left Sana'a at the head of an army to fight Prince Ahmed.

"Imam Wazoor swore on his honour to the mission that he had nothing to do with the murder of the late Imam, but it is generally believed in Yemen that the murderer was none other than the chief of the police Jamal Al Jamool who was persuaded to commit the crime by the British officials in Aden. The report alleges that it is quite possible that the British had a hand in the murder because they sent a warship to Al Hodayida after the murder on a courtesy visit to Yemen.

"The Yemenite government expressed their hot displeasure at the attitude of the Arab League and told the mission to leave Sana'a to get weapons for the new government or it (the government) would apply to the British government for help. The report also said that the tribes were attacking Sana'a and looting was prevalent everywhere. The mission expected Sana'a to fall in Ahmed's hands at any moment.

"Al Wirtilany, the Maghreb merchant in Yemen who is said to have had a hand in the murder of Imam Yehia, told the mission that the murder was necessary for the happiness of the Yemenites. Imam Ahmed, says the report, told the tribes that they could help themselves to the possessions and fortune in Sana'a of his murdered father. Hence the enthusiasm displayed by the tribes in attacking Sana'a.

"The mission explains in its report that it was watched by the new government and that on one occasion the members of the mission were looked inside a room which smelt of paint and oil in the Imam's palace so that they might not see some unknown visitors who were in the palace at the time.

The report also says that the inhabitants of Sana'a are talking these days about Sultanof (of the Russian Foreign Ministry who served for a period at the Russian Legation in Cairo and who figured in the recent trade talks between Russia and Egypt). It is said said that he was in Yemen for ten years as a representative of a Yemenite merchant of Russian origin by the name of Hakeemof. The report also says that the Yemenites believe that Russia, England, and U.S.A. have designs on Yemen which is said to be rich in uranium and oil.

Al Misri's version.

Al Misri publishes an interesting story on Yemen under an equally interesting headline. The headline reads: "The Sana'a government threatens to seek the aid of Foreign countries if the League does not help it. Seif Al Islam Ahmed requests the League to remain in Hadjaz until his forces occupy Sana'a." The daily then publishes two stories, one from its correspondent in Aden, and the other from its correspondent in Jiddah. The Aden Correspondent says: "The new Yemenite government may decide to refuse holding a plebiscite, and may withdraw from the Arab League if the latter does not support it. It is

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generally believed that the monarchs of the Arab countries will make the League support Prince Ahmed".

The Jiddah correspondent, Zohair Ascran, reports that Hussein Al Kobsy, the new Foreign Minister in Yemen has cabled to Azzam Pasha in Saudi Arabia threatening that the new Yemenite government would seek the aid of foreign countries if the Arab League did not support it. The Arab League delegation held a meeting following the receipt of the cable and the members of the delegation expressed their abhorrence of the cable. His Majesty King Ibn Saoud was extremely annoyed, seeing that he, as well as the Arab League, had already declared that he would not allow foreign interference in Yemen.

The same correspondent says that according to reports received in Jidda from Yemen, the Yemenite tribes were giving their full support to Ahmed after they discovered that the late Imam was murdered. He also says that the greater part of the army is with Ahmed, and that King Ibn Saoud has refused to give airplanes and armoured cars to Ibn Al Wazoor. The correspondent then goes on to say that the Arab League delegation received cables from Ahmed and Ibn Al Wazoor informing it that it was advised to remain in Hedjaz until a safe place in Yemen was found where the delegation could meet and confer with the present government, or with Ahmed. Ahmed also suggested in a cable to Azzam Pasha that the delegation should wait in Hedjaz until he succeeded in invading and capturing Sana'a. King Ibn Saoud and the Arab League delegation cabled back saying that it was necessary that the delegation entered Yemen immediately. This is how matters stand at present, explains the correspondent who also reports that 2 British and 3 American warships have arrived in Jiddah.

Azzam Pasha says he was given assurances by Mr Tuck and Sir Ronald Campbell.

"I called on Azzam Pasha", says Al Misri's correspondent in Jiddah, "and asked him about this strange coincidence (the arrival of the warships in Jiddah) and about the rumours that the British had something to do with the recent developments in Yemen. He replied: "When the Arab League Council took a resolution at the close of its session concerning foreign interference in Yemen, the British and American Ambassadors communicated with me singly and denied that their countries had any connection with the recent incident or that they had any intention to interfere in Yemen's internal affairs. Each country interpreted our resolution as meaning it. When I arrived in Jiddah, the British and American representatives repeated to me what their colleagues in Cairo had told me, that is, their countries had no intention of exploiting the recent developments in Yemen."

Mussamarat Al Guuib's story.

Maitre Abdel Kader Hamza, one of the editors of Al Misri, writes an amusing article this morning in Mussamarat Al Guuib in which he states that Yemen is extremely uncivilized and primitive. Hamza was sent recently with Zohair Ascran to Yemen to investigate the situation on the spot. He says that there are no shops or grocers in Sana'a, the Yemenite capital, that when he was leaving Sana'a to Cairo he

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wanted to buy a few sandwiches to eat during the 9 hour journey by plane but could find no food for sale. He finally called on the Minister of Interior who issued a ministerial order authorising him to get a loaf of bread and a few boiled eggs from the government's food stock.

The local political situation.

Nahas Pasha made a speech yesterday before a large crowd which came from Sharkiya province to greet him, says the Wafdist papers, Al Misri and Sawt Al Umma. The speech is very violent in character and too long to translate, but it is interesting to note that the Pasha directs his attack against the present Egyptian Government instead of the British. Mokrashi Pasha and his team are accused of being charlatans, incompetent, and tyrants. The Egyptians are hungry and the present administration is corrupt, claims Nahas Pasha.

A coalition Cabinet.

Akhbar El Yom writes: "Some amateur politicians tried to get a coalition cabinet formed which was to comprise Shorif Sabri Pasha, Ali Maher Pasha, Ismail Sidky Pasha, Hussein Sirry Pasha, Abdel Patah Yehia Pasha, Serag Eldine Pasha, Ali Zaki Al Orabi Pasha, Osman Moharram Pasha, Heikal Pasha, Abdel Galil Abu Samra Pasha etc.... It was said that the British would have been very glad to see such a Cabinet formed, but when they saw that there was no hope of having it formed, they declared that they were not interested in Egypt's internal affairs.

"It seems that the attempts to form a coalition Cabinet were made behind Nahas Pasha's back. He did not know, for instance, that some of his supporters had promised to persuade him to agree to the formation of a coalition Cabinet. Hence his denial that he was in favour of an all-party Cabinet." ---

Al Kutla's attack on the government and the British.

Al Kutla attacks the Egyptian government in a short editorial under the headline: "Cabinets resign for less important reasons". The daily points out that the Cabinet failed in its presentation of the Egyptian complaint before the Security Council, and in combatting the cholera epidemic, poverty, ignorance, disease, and the high cost of living.

The same daily publishes an editorial under the rather amusing headline: "Our partnership with the British will make us lose our sleep at night and bring humiliation during the day". It explains that the joint defence board and the Sudan Condominium would give the Egyptians a headache.

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Al Kutla says Egypt lost by
the trade agreement between Russia and Egypt.

Under the headline: "The ordeb of wheat costs LE 10 according to the Russian trade agreement", Al Kutla writes: "The barter of Egyptian cotton for Russian wheat is based on giving Russia one Kentar of our cotton for 2 ordeb of Russian wheat. Seeing that the kentar of cotton costs LE 20, it means that the ordeb of wheat is costing us LE 10. It is quite clear that such a sacrifice on Egypt's part was unnecessary. Our cotton has a good reputation and the government should have driven a harder bargain. At any rate, the government is to blame for the shortage of wheat in Egypt, seeing it did not import sufficient fertilizers".

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ARAB WORLD AFFAIRS

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Weekly SurveyGENERALLeague's Session Draws to its Close.

In the course of a week of discussions, the Arab League Council and its various committees aired a number of political, economic and legal problems. Some of which were originally listed on the official agenda (see issues No. 19 and 21) namely: Palestine, Libya, Anglo-Arab alliance, Syro-Lebanese currency dispute and unification of currencies. Some of the new items dealt with, included a petition from the Viot-Namense Government, relations with the UN Bureau for the Middle East to be set up in Cairo, a suggestion for calling an Asiatic Conference, the condition of the Moslem D.P.'s in Europe and probably the question of modifying the League Charter.

A novel feature has emerged from the discussions on Palestine with the decision of the Council to establish a "miniature" Palestine Administration, headed by a triumvirate: the Mufti, 'Azzam Pasha and the 'Iraqi Taha al-Hashemi, Inspector-General of the Arab "Liberation" force. It is stated that others may possibly be added at a later date (Ahram, 16.2.). This body is described as designed to form the "backbone" of the League's Military Committee and as such it will conduct Arab affairs in Palestine. Its seat will be located in Palestine, whilst its various sub-committees will be set up in the neighbouring countries, in accordance with the specific functions to be assigned to each. The question of chairmanship has been left open, but it was decided that the new body should come under the control of the League (ibid.).

it seems,

The decision constitutes another major defeat for the Mufti and a point scored by the Transjordan delegation. It will be recalled that the latter, and particularly Suleiman Sukkari, the T.J. Minister of Finance, was reported to have been stubbornly opposed to the idea of setting up a Pal. Arab Government composed almost exclusively of the A.H.E. and its followers. Other considerations, also, may have prevailed, such as the Mufti's reputation outside the Middle East and as Sukkari pointed out, the desire to avoid possible accusations of undemocratic procedure on the part of the League and the danger of exacerbating the Palestine Opposition parties. It was therefore agreed that the A.H.E. should try to come to an understanding with the Opposition for the purpose of forming a coalition government (Pal. Post, 11.2.). The Mufti, in addition to his failure to secure the military and financial control of the Palestine affairs, is thus faced with a distinct defeat in the political field. Possibly to sweeten the pill, the A.H.E. representatives were granted for the first time - full participation in the Council's proceedings (as from the 12th February meeting), but without the right of vote. Whereas until now only two representatives of the A.H.E. attended the meetings, the League Secretariat now announced that three representatives would attend, namely Jamal Husseini, Rafiq Tamimi and Emile Ghouri. Moreover it was stated by 'Azzam Pasha to 'Ahram' (13.2.) that the Council decided that the Mufti should head the Palestine delegation, as a "proof that the Arab States insist on Palestine becoming an independent Arab State".

As to the military aspect on the 9th February the Political Committee heard Gen. Isma'il Safwat's explanations of the Military Committee's report. He is said to have come from Baghdad especially for this purpose (AP, 8.2.). Reportedly he is the one who raised the question of opening a "second front" in the Negev and stressed the urgency of organising the supply of foodstuffs and arms to the Arabs of Palestine and of providing for a proper network of communication between the Arab World and the Palestine front (Assas, 10.2.). A Committee was then appointed composed of Riyadh Solh, Jamil Mardam and 'Azzam, to examine Safwat's report. This committee met the next day to discuss the report of the Military Committee and, as "Assas" says (12.2.), it can be said to have approved of the Military Committee's report. Both bodies are understood to be agreed that no invasion can take place before the British withdraw (Pal. Post, 10.2.). Even the much-publicized concerted general attack fixed by the military leaders for the 15th February (AP, 8.2.) had to be postponed. A plan calling for the occupation of Palestinian towns and villages as soon as the British leave, and for an Arab campaign to be operated during the remaining

ENCLOSURE

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months of the Mandate is said to have been considered. On the 12th February, As'ad Dagher announced that the League Council had decided to hold off its contemplated invasion, pending the decision of the Security Council. The Arab peoples, he stated, have announced their determination to fight any international force, but the League cannot adopt decisions based on possibilities. Safwat, however, who attended the same press conference, said without hesitation that the Arab States should dispatch their regular forces to Palestine immediately, if an international force is sent to that country. (AP, 12.2.43) League official attitude of expectation and restraint regarding military action is possibly actuated by the apprehension, lest such a step precipitate intervention by the Security Council. On the other hand, political activity at Lake Success has been increased. On the 12th February Riyadh Solh, in his capacity of Chairman of the League's session, instructed the Arab representatives at UNO to warn the UNO member States not to support the enforcement of Partition, lest it compel the League to send regular forces to Palestine (Ahram, 13.2.). Following that, telephone conversations took place between Cairo and Lake Success (Fares Khouri, Camille Sham'oun, Mahmoud Fawzi), when it was learned that the US Government (?) would raise the implementation issue at the Security Council on the 17th of February. The exact nature of the League's instructions to the above mentioned Arab leaders (Ahram, 16.2.) has not been disclosed, but judging by Fares Khouri's legalistic arguments before the Council, (e.g. the unconstitutional formation of the Implementation Commission), it may be expected that the Arab will not reject any delaying device they can think of.

Libya

Consideration of the Libyan problem has become particularly urgent in view of the fact that the Big Four Enquiry Committee for the former Italian Colonies is due to arrive in Egypt shortly and thence to proceed to Libya, to ascertain the wishes of the population regarding the future status of their country. Although the Commission's arrival in Egypt was previously scheduled for the 9th February, the American Embassy received word that it would arrive in Luxor on the 17th, spend a fortnight there in order to draw up its report on Eritrea and Italian Somaliland and then go to Tripoli as the first stop in Libya (Falastin, 10.2.) on the 7th March (Ahram, 13.2.). Another factor necessitating an early discussion is the new situation resulting from the USA's having concluded a peace treaty with Italy, it being feared that America, in addition to Russia and France, may support Italy's demand for an Italian trusteeship of Libya (Akhbar al-Yom, 7.2.). Therefore, 'Azzam pointedly raised this issue at the very opening of the League's session, since it was always been a subject which he has devoted much care and attention. He reminded the Council of the resolutions on Libya taken as early as 1945, to the effect that Libya should be independent and united, or also come under the League's or Egypt's trusteeship (Falastin, 10.2.). It should be noted, that prior to the League's conference, all member States, according to "Akhbar al-Yom" (ibid.), sent identical notes to the Big Four Foreign Ministers, demanding for independence and unity of Libya, stoppage of Italian immigration to Libya and rejecting any status of trusteeship or protectorate. On the 13th "Ahram" reported that the Libya Liberation Committee in Cairo had decided to go to Libya this week and visit Barca, Tripoli and Fezzan, prior to meeting the Enquiry Committee. On the 14th the Libyan question came up before the League Council, which decided to instruct Bashir Sa'dawi, a Tripoli leader, to go there on behalf of the League.

Anglo-Arab alliance issue deferred.

The question of concluding an Anglo-Arab collective agreement is reported to have been considered by the League Council. However, it was decided to defer it to the March meeting, at the request of Noqrashi Pasha and the ultimate assent of Riyadh Solh and Hamdi Pachachi, the promoters of the collective alliance idea. Noqrashi's reasons are said to have been (a) his desire to consult his Ambassador to Washington and Minister to Moscow; (b) his belief that Bevin is still under the influence of his military advisors and not very keen on withdrawal from Egypt and Iraq; (c) an important meeting was to take place at the British Embassy on the 17th February, at which the British Ambassador, Sir Ronald Campbell, would discuss with high-ranking officials of the Embassy and prominent members of the British Community the question of Anglo-Egyptian relations and survey the possibilities of coming to terms with a Coalition Government (Victor 'Azzam in Pal. Post, 15.2.).

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The question of an Anglo-Arab alliance is closely connected to that of modifying the League's Charter. Both Riyadh Solh and Jamil Mardam are favourably inclined to it. The former reminded "Misri" (9.2.) that the obligation to consult the League members prior to concluding a treaty with a foreign power was mentioned in the Alexandria Protocol, but was not embodied in the League Charter, in spite of his insistence on it. J. Mardam justified the proposed modification on the grounds that incisive changes had occurred in the Arab World since the signing of the Protocol and the Charter: Syria had achieved her independence, Egypt and Iraq had adopted a new stand towards Britain and the conflict between East and West had intensified. Therefore, he stated, no Arab State should conclude an alliance with a foreign State, but should endeavour to strengthen the economic and political ties with the rest of Arab countries. A collective agreement, he went on, was not feasible either, since the Arab League had not as yet acquired the authority to be a contracting party. Despite this, in his opinion, it was desirable to endow her with that authority and to recognize her as a regional organisation. As to the danger of Communism, Mardam pooh-poohed its influence in Arab lands and ascribed even that possibility to Arab resentment of Western faithlessness (Kutla, 10.2.). Besides, he denied that Britain had approached the Levant States with a proposal to conclude an alliance with her (Difa', 10.2.).

A brief interlude in the dealings of the League's Political Committee accounted for the appearance (on the 12th February) of Sir John Boyd-Orr, Chairman of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in the company of Hefnawi, Egyptian representative on that body, and Mr. 'Abdul Hakim Rifa'i, Egyptian Financial Under-Secretary. The latter was invited to address the committee, because it was he who proposed at the last session of the UN Assembly to establish an Economic Committee for the Middle East, along the lines of the one set up for the Far East. This proposal was subsequently endorsed by the Arab States. It was chiefly for the purpose of discussing this matter that the Egyptian economic delegation recently visited Syria. Sir John explained to the Political Committee the nature of the UN Bureau for the Middle East, which the FAO Conference in Cairo had decided to set up in that city and declared that it aimed at co-operation between the UNO and the League member States in matters of supply of commodities which tended to raise the standard of living, and improve agriculture and industry (Ahram, 13.2., see below).

Currency problems.

Currency questions have been considered, both with reference to the Syro-Lebanese dispute over remaining in the franc area and regarding the plan for the unification of currencies in the Arab States. The former question was referred to Mediation Committee composed of Hassan Jabbara, former Syrian Minister of Finance, and the Egyptian Dr. Rifa'i (Ahram, 16.2.). No representative of the Lebanon seems to have been included, but we are told (Balagh, 11.2.) that the matter was discussed by Solh and Mardam at the Syrian Legation. It should also be mentioned that on the 7th February, a Syrian-Lebanese economic conference took place, as a result of which a joint announcement was issued, advising both governments to sever all connections with the franc as soon as possible (ANA, 8.2.). On the 9th, Wahbi Hariri, Syrian Finance Minister, warned that the separation of the Syrian and Lebanese currencies would inevitably destroy the unity of interests between these countries (ANA, 9.2.). He also welcomed the linking of the Syrian currency to that of Egypt (ANA, 8.2.).

The unification of currencies and the introduction of a standard "Arab Pound" (Balagh, 9.2.) were proposed by the Iraqi delegation (Ahram, 13.2.). Jamil Mardam had previously declared himself strongly in favour of the idea. It was essential, he said, that the Arab should render themselves independent of foreign currencies, particularly as long as the Eastern countries "enjoyed a far superior degree of prosperity and well-being than did the peoples of the West" (sic!) (Difa', 10.2.). It was finally decided to refer the problem to a committee of Arab experts, assisted by financial authorities of world renown (Ahram, 13.2.). It is intended to select a Swede and a Belgian; the name of Van Zeeland, the habitual financial advisor to the Arab governments, is being mentioned in this connection (Ahram, 16.2.).

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Viet-nam.

A peculiar problem, reminiscent of Indonesia, presented itself to the League Council, when a petition was read from the Viet-namese Government (French Indo-China) requesting the League to support its demand for liberation from the French and furthermore to raise the issue at the UN (Ahram, 11.2.). The League Secretariat informed the Council that it had received a complaint from Viet-nam that the French were using North African Arab soldiers against her (ibid., 13.2.). The Council, therefore, decided to "express its sympathy with Viet-nam and its disapproval of any Arab fighting against her; it would furthermore concern itself with the issue, when it is raised at the Security Council by one of the States" (Assas, 13.2.). According to "Ahram" (13.2.), the issue resembles that of Indonesia and it is therefore the duty of every Arab State to support and defend it when it comes up for discussion at the Security Council, presented by an Arab State that will be chosen shortly. This decision, incidentally, makes strange reading in view of the fact that the Viet-nam Cabinet is overwhelmingly - Communist.

Asiatic Conference.

Another subject considered by the Political Committee was a suggestion by 'Issa Nakhleh, the A.H.E. representative at Lake Success, to summon an Asiatic Conference for discussing their particular problems. "Ahram" (12.2.) learned that "national institutions" in China, India and Pakistan had expressed readiness to participate in this conference. The League Council, however, refrained from going into the matter and referred it to the Secretariat for further study. (Assas, 13.2.).

Food and Agricultural Organisation's Regional Conference in Cairo.

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation's Regional Conference opened in Cairo on the 2nd February with a speech by John Boyd-Orr, the Organisation's Director-General, who pointed out that the scarcity of foodstuffs in Europe was a result of World War II. He warned that famine would befall the world if agricultural production was not increased, and asked the ME countries to assign new areas to be brought under cultivation (Ahram, 3.2.). Special mention was made by the speaker of the possibility of developing Egypt for this purpose. Besides a possible increase of production thanks to the Nile Waters, Tewfik al-Hefnawi, a former Minister of Agriculture in Egypt and presently temporary regional advisor to the FAO, had stated in a report to the Geneva Conference on the Near East, that large areas could be put under cultivation by the use of water from deep wells and that production of winter crops could be greatly increased (E.G., 29.1.).

Amongst the problems on the agenda of the Conference were the possibilities of increasing agricultural production on present cultivated areas by the use of better farming and agricultural techniques; improved seeds, fertilizers and pesticides; improved animal husbandry; the modernisation of hand tools; farm implements and machinery; and the expansion of education and extension of services. Forestry problems included reforestation, planting of trees to protect cultivated areas from soil erosion, and the setting up of nurseries for growing young trees (E.G., 29.1.).

The Conference specially dealt with questions closely related to agricultural and social problems in the ME. The sub-committee appointed to examine the social aspects of the food situation in the ME reported that "the social condition of the fellahen ought to be improved" (Sawt al-Umma, 9.2.). The food sub-committee reached similar conclusions. It stated that between 60 to 90 per cent of the ME population are underfed (ibid.). For Egypt the proportion was from 70 to 80 per cent (Zaman, 29.1.).

The Conference's final report emphasised that 2,865,000 feddans were under cultivation in Iraq while 3 millions were not as yet cultivated. The cost of cultivating each feddan by new irrigation schemes was estimated at 5/8 dollars (Zaman, 10.2.). The Conference has accordingly considered a five-year programme for irrigation and drainage development in that country (AP, 14.2.).

In the Lebanon, several new schemes were suggested. Tewfik al-Hefnawi, the regional advisor, had informed the Lebanese Government of the expected arrival in the Lebanon of a mission of American engineers to investigate Lebanon's needs for loans and other means of increasing its agricultural production (ANA, 26.1.).

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In Syria, the cost of agricultural development was estimated at a total of 350 million Syrian pounds (Zaman,10.2.). 250,000 acres would be brought under irrigation provided agreement could be reached with 'Iraq over the supply of water needed to implement this scheme. Syria, it was stated, would need an immediate loan for the necessary equipment (AP,14.2.).

As for Egypt, the report recommended that it was of primary importance to begin developing as soon as possible new areas which would be productive in 1950. The suggestion was for 50,000 feddans in Lower Egypt, 65,000 in Upper Egypt and 6,000 in the Nubia region, on the southern borders. Total cost of the plan was estimated at 3,430,000 pounds (Zaman,10.2.). The main recommendation of the Conference was for a plan to be submitted to the meeting of the FAO Council in Washington on April 5th calling for 25,000 acres to be converted annually at a cost of \$300,000 for a system of basin irrigation which would be supplemented by pumping wells in Upper Egypt. Egyptian production, it was pointed out, as a result of improved irrigation facilities could be increased by more than 50% (AP,14.2.). Apart from the above mentioned technical recommendations, the Regional Conference emphasised that FAO assistance should be given to ME countries in the purchase of priorities and in the shipment of laboratory equipment and dairy machinery from the countries which would supply them. It also decided to ask the FAO to establish a regional office in Cairo for the whole of the ME for the purpose of strengthening ME collaboration (AP,14.2., see above).

The Regional Conference closed its session on the 14th. The meeting were attended by Egypt, Ethiopia, 'Iraq, Lebanon, Syria (as participant-members) and by Iran, Sa'udia, Turkey, Yemen (as observers) (Assas,29.1.). Palestine was not represented. The Arab League was allowed to have two delegates as observers (J.d'E.,5.2.). American and British representatives also attended (Ahram,2.2.), as well as U.N. experts (Assas,4.2.). Ahmad 'Abdul Ghaffar, the Egyptian Minister of Agriculture was selected as chairman (Misri,3.2.).

Six FAO experts in co-operation with the various Governments concerned provided the conference with information on the type of agricultural assistance needed. The experts were sent to the M.E. a month ago and will remain there for several months to start work on the programme adopted by the Conference (AP,27.1.).

EGYPT

Anglo-Egyptian relations.

Anglo-Egyptian relations have appeared in the front pages of the Egyptian press again, as a result of the Arab League's meetings in Cairo, which was said to include discussions on a general Anglo-Arab pact (see General), & of the meeting between the British Ambassador and the Egyptian Foreign Affairs Minister. It was also reported to have examined the Anglo-Egyptian question (Misri,10.2.), and Bevin's speech at the Anglo-Egyptian Society in London, on the occasion of Farouq's birthday (ANA,11.2.).

These outstanding facts have given rise to various rumours, namely that of American mediation for a change in the Egyptian Cabinet so as to include all parties (Akher Sa'a,11.2. & Mussamarat,15.2.). Talks for a resumption of Anglo-Egyptian negotiations were also reported to have taken place between Casey and "an important Egyptian personality" (Mussamarat,15.2.).

None of the above mentioned factors however seem to lead to a decisive improvement in Anglo-Egyptian relations. The League, it was pointed out, did not include the Egyptian question in its agenda (Akher Sa'a,11.2.) and the rumour that Bevin would fly to Cairo (Misri,11.2.) was denied by the Foreign Office.

The formation of a national Cabinet, will also be exceedingly difficult to set up. The British Government was alleged to have insisted that the Wafd be included in an all-Parties Cabinet which would be fully backed by Parliament, and which would negotiate with Britain (Mussamarat,15.2.). America is also reported to have intervened in pressing for the inclusion of the Wafd in such a Cabinet, since she considers a representative of the Wafd necessary as a check against foreign

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Communist infiltration (Akhbar Sa'a, 11.2.). This report seems to be in line with the British slogan that an Anglo-Egyptian or even an Anglo-Arab pact would prevent Communism from gaining a stand in the Middle East. It also appears that in order to convince public opinion of such a necessity prominence has to be given in the press to minor events which appear to be related to local Communist activities. Such an instance is the undeserved importance given by newspapers to the arrest of six alleged Communist students in Cairo who were stated to have been in possession of "secret codes", "reports on recent strikes in Egypt", etc. or to have "burned important convicting evidence" before their arrest (Kutla, 13.2.).

Bevin's mild speech of the 11.2. did not produce the reaction expected by the British Foreign Minister. It was coldly received in Cairo and the press unanimously criticised it. The Waqdist "Sawt al-Umma" (13.2.) remarked that Bevin "has not modified his imperialistic views" since he completely ignores Egypt's political evolution". "Ahran" (12.2.) stated that "Bevin has not freed himself from obsolete imperialist conceptions also shared by British diplomatic quarters". "Kutla" (12.2.) described the speech as "irrelevant for Egypt's honour". These sharp criticisms were obviously the result of an unfortunate sentence which might have slipped out in Bevin's speech when he referred to finding out how to conciliate with Egypt's nationalism "without endangering the defence of your territory and of our communication" as being the main difficulty.

It is doubtful whether the present Egyptian Government will desire or be in a position to engage itself in new talks with Britain, before the British make clear their intentions on the question of evacuation. It appears that this question has not been solved yet by Britain whose military experts oppose evacuation at this time and insist on maintaining British troops in the Suez Canal area (Ahran, 13.2.).

Debates on Army in Egyptian Parliament.

A debate on the Government's policy towards the Army was provoked in the Chamber of Deputies on February 9th, as a result of questions raised by Maurice Fakhri 'Abdul Nur (Kotlist) and Fikri Abaza (Nat.). A request from Government benches to discuss the question in closed session was overruled by the President of the Chamber (Kutla, 10.2.).

Deputy 'Abdul Nur started the debates by a short exposé in which he compared the Army's strength under Mohammed 'Ali (276,000 men) to its present (50,000) strength (Ahran, 10.2.). He then accused the British of preventing the Egyptian Army from carrying out most of its plans for improvement. He cited, as an instance, that arms furnished by Britain were obsolete and said that members of Egypt's military mission in Britain were prevented from attending the most important courses (Sawt al-Umma, 10.2.).

Making a reference to the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty which designated Britain as the sole supplier of arms to Egypt, 'Abdul Nur stated that Britain had sold a Tommy-gun for 40 pounds while she got it from the U.S. at half of that price. He also disclosed that Britain had once opposed a project of Ford's to build motorcar factories in Egypt (Ahran, 10.2.) and indicated that motor cars now used in the Egyptian Army were of 48 different types, making their maintenance exceedingly difficult and very costly (Sawt al-Umma, 10.2.).

Dealing with the cost of maintaining a soldier, the speaker charged the Government with extravagance when he pointed out that the sum allocated for depreciation of material amounted to 70 pounds per soldier for the first year of service while in other countries an average of only 20 pounds was allocated. He suggested the setting up of an inquiry commission to investigate that matter (Ahran, 10.2.).

Deputy 'Abdul Nur then remarked that the Army has a shortage of engineers. Engineers, he said, numbered 270, while they numbered 2900 during Mohammed 'Ali's reign (Sawt al-Umma, 10.2.). The Engineer Corps, he added, lack adequate material necessary to a modern army (Ahran, 10.2.), while the army itself suffers from a shortage of several kinds of armaments (Sawt al-Umma, 10.2.). As far as Army manoeuvres were concerned, the speaker said they were very rarely and irregularly held. He went on to criticise the newly enforced military service law which, he said, conscripted only 30,000 out of 180,000 eligibles for service; most were

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the left for the reserve of territorial army (ibid.). Deputy 'Abdul Nur then spoke of the Army budget (details of which were not published). According to "Sawt al-Umma" (10.2.) the speaker met with strong opposition from various sources when he raised the question of the soldier's wages, and was compelled to omit this question from his statement.

Fikri Abaza spoke next and recalled promises made by Nograshi, on his return from the UN, to strengthen the Army's power. He suggested an increase in the Army's budget and said it was most important to free the country from the 1936 treaty provisions which compelled Egypt to buy arms only from Britain. Britain, he charged, was supplying the Egyptian army with old-fashioned weapons (Ahram, 10.2.). He also asked for arms factories to be set up in Egypt and for another military mission to be sent abroad. The Army, he stressed, was in great need of technicians and engineers (ibid.).

The Defense Minister closed the debates by assuring the assembled that the Government was seriously considering the Army's needs and that the various plans for improvements would be implemented. In the course of the debates he had disclosed that a military mission was on its way to Czechoslovakia for the purpose of purchasing arms for the Egyptian army (Ahram, 10.2.).

This disclosure is hardly to be reconciled with the military clauses of the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty which compel Egypt to buy arms only from Britain. It is also difficult to ascertain whether the military mission mentioned by the Defence Minister was or was not intrusted to purchase arms on behalf of the Arab League, or if this was the deal referred to by 'Azzam, (League's Secretary) when he disclosed that the whole affair of purchase of arms from Czechoslovakia for the Arab League had failed owing to indiscretions by newspapermen who disclosed the facts too early (Rse al-Yussuf 10.2.).

In any event, there must be some truth in the report of the "Misri" London correspondent (12.2.) that Britain had asked for explanations on Egypt's intention to purchase arms from Czechoslovakia. The correspondent emphasised that "it is generally felt in London that purchase of arms by Egypt from a country other than Britain is a matter coming under the provisions of the 1936 Treaty" (Misri, 12.2.).

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2.3.1948

ARAB WORLD AFFAIRS

No.24 (51)

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Weekly SurveyGENERALScene Shifts to Damascus

The loadline of British rule in Palestine, the 15th May, and the rapidly deteriorating international situation have presented the Arab League with two closely interrelated problems of primary urgency: Action in Palestine to prevent implementation of Partition and conclusion of a collective security alliance with Britain. The first has had a lion's share in the proceedings of the League's Seventh Session, which closed on the 22nd February, and the latter, it is being predicted, will dominate the scene (or more likely, the behind-the-scenes) of the deliberations scheduled to open on March 20th. In order to be able to do this, and at the same time to give Palestine its constant and undivided attention, the League's Political Committee, as already mentioned in our previous issues, established a supreme advisory body to conduct political and military action in Palestine. According to "Assas" (1.3.), it will also supervise the activities of local boycott committees. The committee is composed of 'Azzam Pasha as chairman and representatives of the League member states and the A.H.E. (the Mufti). Jamil Mardam is to assume chairmanship during the absence of 'Azzam in Yemen (Misri, 29.2.). By appointing this body the Council effected a separation of the political from the purely military leadership thus facilitating the military command to work smoothly (ibid.). It was also decided that both this and the Military Committee would fix their permanent headquarters in Damascus, which is to form the meetingplace of an important military conference for Palestine, due to convene in the next few days (Ahram, 29.2.). The members of the Military Committee including Isma'il Safwat, as well as the Syrian deputies who are participating in the fighting, have already arrived in Damascus. The Conference will draw up plans for the formation of the Arab Liberation Army, which will be made up of regular forces of League members under Safwat's command. King 'Abdullah has allegedly informed the League that his frontier are open to any force wishing to cross from Syrian into Palestine (V. Azam in Pal. Post, 24.2.). This attitude on the part of 'Abdullah has been confirmed by facts and may be explained as evidence of his willingness to cooperate with the League as a result of the latter having accepted his viewpoint regarding the undesirability of setting up a Palestine Arab Government or Administration dominated by the AHE. Further proof of 'Abdullah's change of mind is the appointment of the Transjordan representative on the Military Committee, 'Abdul Qador al-Jundi and his visit to Damascus (see our last issue). The decisive movements, we are told, will start before the beginning of spring and the first signs of them will be seen immediately after the Damascus Conference, since Taha Hashemi and Fawzi Qawuqji have completed their preparations for their departure to Palestine (Misri, 29.2.).

The expected visit of the Mufti and other members of the AHE to Damascus, as well as the presence of Musa 'Alami and Brig. Clayton in this city lends support to the belief that, along with military planning, new efforts will be made to find a formula enabling some sort of cooperation between the chief participants and antagonists in the Palestinian drama: The Husseinis on one hand and the Hashomites and Musa 'Alami on the other, with the League and the British as mediating agents.

Oil Reprisals.

As a corollary to the military measures, the League decided - as was announced by 'Azzam - "Not to grant any facilities or new oil concessions to those States which supported Partition, until the situation in Palestine has been clarified" (J. d'Egypte, 23.2.). This is why Jamil Mardam abandoned his projected trip to Ibn Sa'ud, as it had become purposeless (ibid.). On the other hand, Mr. Marshall, when asked by pressmen for comments on the League's reported resolution, replied that the State Department had no information concerning it (AFP, 26.2.). It should be mentioned that the above statement, although it does not specify, whether the reference to the oil-concessions includes the construction of pipelines for exploiting concessions already granted, has been generally accepted as applying to the latter as well, and is considered as a move directed primarily against the TAPline company (e.g. Zaman, 1.3.). To this may be added the interview of the Saudi Emir Faisal

ENCLOSURE

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to the "Misri" correspondent in Jadda. The attitude of his country, declared Faisal, was absolutely clear and gave no justification to the despicable attacks on his father. If the Arab States decide to cancel the oil-concessions of pre-partitionist powers, Sa'udi Arabia, although having no other sources of income, will be the first to carry out the decision and drive out any American from her soil (Misri, 29.2.). Another anti-American step is reported to have been taken, incidentally, by Sa'udi Arabia. According to this report (Kutla, 25.2.), the Sa'udi authorities have informed the USA that they are determined not to renew the lease of the Dhahran airfield on its expiration date, March 1, 1949, since they do not see the necessity for US Air force personnel to remain in that country.

Inter-Arab Alliance.

By referring all matters connected with Palestine to the Military and Political Palestine Committees, the Arab League Council has cleared the way to a discussion of the inter-Arab alliance problem; as a preliminary step, it is widely rumoured, towards the conclusion of a collective Anglo-(resp. Anglo-Saxon-)Arab Military Alliance. This idea was brought up by Jamil Mardam at the last session. As was explained by him at some length to "Ahram" (29.2.), he submitted to the Political Committee a 3-point proposal suggesting (a) prohibiting the conclusion of any treaty by a League member with a non-member that would be apt to prejudice its sovereignty or independence or granting a foreign power a military or economic status harmful to other Arab States, prior to submitting the clauses of the projected treaty to the League Council; (b) the conclusion of an inter-Arab Military and Political Alliance by all League members, in accordance with the provisions of the Alexandria Protocol and the League Charter; such an alliance will bind each signatory to adopt a unified policy regarding foreign relations and collective defence (Misri, 23.2.); (c) the revision of the League Charter, in order to adapt it to present conditions and to enable it to meet the requirements specified in (a).

This proposal was felt to be a limitation on the freedom of action of the individual Arab States. Moreover, since it was not based on the League Charter and was not included in the agenda, most delegations decided not to discuss it before contacting their respective governments. This postponement, we are assured, was not due to internal differences, but to the feeling that under prevailing conditions any discussion of the subject would be detrimental to the position of the League (Ahram, 1.3.).

As to the prospects of an Anglo-Arab alliance, the influential "Le Monde" (12.2.) opined that whereas separate military treaties would be intolerable to the Arab nationalists, they could readily accept a collective alliance sanctioned by the League, as it would eliminate inter-Arab reprobation and rivalry. Moreover, Britain, by virtue of her being the decisive power in Palestine, possesses the most important element of bargaining in the negotiations with the Arabs. It is difficult to see, the paper argues, how the League could reject proposals granting the Arabs so many advantages and fulfil their unity. On the other hand, an official statement issued by the Arab Office in London, does not think that Britain's good intentions towards the Arabs are sufficient to induce the Arabs to enter into regional alliance with her. Before she can hope to achieve this, Britain must bring about a change in America's attitude towards the Arabs, because Britain, in the event of war, would be America's vanguard in the Middle East and therefore any alliance with Britain means in reality an indirect alliance with America (Misri, 1.3.).

There is more talk of efforts being made to integrate Turkey and Iran in the framework of British Middle East security arrangements. "Misri" (29.2.) says there are signs of a strengthening of the ties between the League member States and the countries referred to. According to this paper numerous meetings took place recently in Baghdad, Cairo, Ankara and Beirut between the Arab Premiers and Turkish and Iranian diplomats. The moderate Tehoran paper "Ghiyam-i-Iran" dwells on developments in relations with Britain since Mr. Eden's visit to Persia in January. The political quarters in London, the paper asserts, are prepared to revise the South Iranian oil agreement and to recognize to a certain extent Iran's claims in this respect. The British Government had further decided to include Iran in the ME defence area which is to comprise all Arab States with the exception of Yemen. This is also affirmed by the Tudeh organ "Mardum". It is said that Mr. Eden had informed the directors of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. of the results of his talks on

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this subject and that he suggested that one of them go to Teheran and start negotiations with the Persian Government regarding Southern Iranian oil (AFP, 21.2.).

Addenda to League Resolutions and Activities

Arab Offices: The League Secretariat is preparing a new system for the Arab offices in New York, Washington, London and Paris, following Iraq's having surrendered its control over them and agreed to League supervision. The Political Committee has allocated large sums for their maintenance and a staff of young Arabs from all Arab countries is now being selected (Misri, 29.2.). Musa 'Alami, it is reported, will continue heading the Offices.

Fund-raising: The Political Committee calls upon the Arab Governments to see to it that the funds for Palestine raised from public drives be directed through the proper channels (J. d'Egypte, 23.2.).

League's Budget: The League's budget for 1948 has been fixed at £E 210,240; Syria's contribution to it amounts to 16% (Alif Ba, 11.2.).

UNESCO to meet in Beirut: Thanks to the efforts made by Dr. Charles Malek, Lebanese Minister in Washington and delegate to the UN, the UN Economic, Social and Cultural Organization decided to hold its October Session in Beirut. He had also suggested that Arabic be made the third official language of the conference (after English and French), but this is still under consideration (Ahram, 19.2.). Philippe Taqla requested the League to set up a committee for laying down a unified Arab plan in preparation for the conference (Ahram, 1.3.). Besides, Dr. Malek is, according to "Kutla" (27.2.), the originator of the idea of establishing a UN Economic Committee for the Middle East on the pattern of those set up for Europe and the Far East and it was he who submitted a proposal to this effect to the UN General Assembly last September.

On Extradition of Criminals: The Legal Committee will submit to the League Council at the next session a proposal which distinguishes between purely political offences and "mixed" ones, thus considering as criminal offences acts involving premeditated murder, poisoning and assaults on Heads of States and their next-of-kin, such as heir presumptives etc. (Ahram, 29.2.).

Resolutions of the League's Cultural Committee: These provide for a unified curriculum on the subjects of national education, history, geography and Arabic, to be applied to all League member States for primary and secondary schools, for the purpose of fastening inter-Arab solidarity and the consciousness of a common heritage and destiny (Misri, 23.2.).

Relief to Libya and Tunisia: The Political Committee decided that the Arab Governments contribute £E 200,000 to aid the hunger-stricken areas of Libya and the Maghrib, particularly Tunisia. This amount represents the minimum that the Arab States are called upon to allocate. Further particulars on the aid and its distribution in the public interest are being kept secret. A memo by the Rif leader, 'Abdul Krim, on the food situation in Tunisia and Algeria has been submitted to Habib Bourguiba, the Tunisian leader, to 'Azzam, urging the League to apply to the international relief organizations for assistance for those countries (Assas, 22.2.).

The Maghrib problem: As to Libya, in addition to sending a mission composed of members of the Libyan Liberation Committee, the Political Committee contented itself with reiterating previous resolutions insisting on Libya's unity and independence and promising every assistance necessary to securing these ends. Regarding Morocco, preliminary discussions, according to "Ahram" (19.2.), led to the crystallizing of two views on the question: the one favoured submission of the issue to the Security Council, the other - to the UN General Assembly. The latter course is thought likely to be followed (ibid.). There is, however, no trace of either of them in the official resolution, which merely states that Morocco had made no progress towards gaining independence and it furthermore expressed regret that the Powers ruling Morocco had done nothing to recognize her claims to self-determination. It also regretted the bloody clashes which recently occurred there (in Tetuan) (J. d'Egypte, 23.2.). The restrained and even lukewarm tone of these resolutions

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stands, it should be noted, in strange contrast to the violent press-campaign waged against alleged French-Spanish collaboration in suppressing Moroccan nationalists and French maladministration in Tunis and Algeria. This cautious attitude on the part of the League has been further underlined by a statement attributed to 'Azzam Pasha or the League, to the effect that the Arab States do not approve of the Moroccan nationalists' stand vis-à-vis Spain. This statement was, of course, vigorously denied by the League Secretariat (Misri, 24.2.).

League Tackles Yemen Crisis.

Following an appeal for Arab League arbitration issued by both contesting parties in the Yemen, an inquiry commission was set up, headed by 'Azzam and composed of delegates of all member States, as follows: Hussein Hosni, Secretary to the King and an expert on Yemen (Egypt), Yussuf Yassin (Sa'udia), 'Abdul Jalil Razi ('Iraq), Mazher Arslan (Syria), Taqi-eddin Sulh (Lebanon), Midhat Jum'a (Transjordan), Shaikh Hassan Ibrahim, the Yemeni representative on the Arab League. Prince Seif-ul-Islam 'Abdullah, who is now in Paris, had cabled the League to allow him to join the delegation, since he was neutral to the conflict, but owing to the urgency of the matter, this idea had to be abandoned (Akher Sa'a, 26.2.).

The delegation left Cairo on the 28th February (Ahram, 29.2.) aboard the schooner "Faruq" equipped with canons and armoured vehicles and accompanied by a military plane. The delegation thought at first to go to Sana'a by air, following the example of the advance party (see last issue), but later changed its mind, in order to be able, possibly, to call representatives of both parties aboard the schooner as neutral ground for arbitration (Akher Sa'a, ibid.). Prior to leaving, the delegation cabled an appeal to both parties to stop hostilities pending the League's verdict. 'Azzam declared that the delegation had no fixed plan and would act according to circumstances (Zaman, 1.3.). It is noteworthy that on the 26th 'Azzam received a despatch from Ibn Sa'ud dissuading him from his "arduous" journey to San'a (Ahram, 29.2.).

EGYPT

The British Scheme for "Sudanization" of the Sudan.

The text of a decree issued by the Sudan Government bringing reforms to the Administration of the Sudan, was published in Cairo on the 22nd February. A copy of the decree had been sent by the Acting Governor General to the Egyptian Government and a second copy to the British Ambassador in Cairo. In an explanatory note attached to the decree the Governor General p.i. stated that the decree will be submitted to the Sudan Advisory Council on March 3rd (Kutla, 23.2.). An official letter dated January 15th by the Foreign Office to the Egyptian Ambassador in London was also published in Cairo. The letter emphasized that the decree on Sudanization had been issued by the Governor General in accordance with the civil and military powers conferred to him by the Anglo-Egyptian 1899 Convention. It asserts that a number of modifications earlier notified to Britain in an Egyptian memorandum had been included in the decree, and states that the decree has the full approbation of the British Government. The letter also suggests a commission of non-official Egyptian and British experts to examine the legal aspects of the decree and namely para.5 of the Egyptian memorandum which pointed out the necessity of Anglo-Egyptian consent before a legislation could be legally put into effect by the Governor General. It finally expresses the hope that "the Egyptian Government has not the intention to limitate the executive authority of the Governor General in matters dealing exclusively with Sudan's internal affairs" (J. d'Egypte, 23.2.).

In decree, comprising 65 articles, provides for the constitution of an Executive and a Legislative organs. The Executive, under the responsible chairmanship of the Governor General (art.17) is to comprise not less than 12 and not more than 18 members, appointed by the Governor General (art.10). The Governor General is also to enjoy full authority on the decisions reached by the Executive (art.19).

The Legislative Council is to comprise appointed members (not exceeding 10) as well as elected members making a total of 65 (art.26). Sudanese Nationals over 30 years of age, resident of the constituency which elects them for over 2 years are eligible or liable to nomination in the Council (art.30). The Legislative Council can

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be dissolved by the Governor General (art.37). Elections are to be held every three years (art.38). The nomination of the Council's chairman must be approved by the Governor General (art.41). The Council is not allowed to legislate on: a) the Sudan Constitution; b) the relations between the Sudanese Government on the one hand and the British and Egyptian Governments on the other; c) the relations between the Sudanese Government and other foreign countries (art.53). Discussions on defence, finance, minorities (national or religious) cannot take place unless previous authorisation from the Executive (art.54). All decisions reached by the Legislative Council are to be notified to the Executive in the form of "recommendations" (art.46). Art. 5 & 6 provide that the Governor General will "when he sees it fit" appoint ministers and under-secretaries responsible to him (Sawt al-Umma, 22.2.).

The decree was described in the Foreign Office letter of the 15.1.48 to the Egyptian Ambassador as "the long-awaited initiative towards self-government in Sudan" (J.d'Egypte, 23.2.).

The publication in Cairo of the decree on the Sudanization of the Sudan, was followed by an outburst of virulent attacks directed against the Egyptian Government and the British. The following headlines in Egyptian newspapers (collected at random by J. D. 24.2.), are most characteristic of the indignation expressed by pressmen belonging to different parties: "Dictatorship in the Sudan". "Plot for setting up a dictatorial regime". "Criminal attempt to separate Sudan from Egypt". "A legislation putting the Sudan under the domination of the Governor General". One of the most striking headlines was that of "Ahram" (27.2.) reading: "His Majesty, Robert Howe the First".

Indeed, the text of the British decree needs very little comment, if at all, to outline its dictatorial character. It is however noteworthy to emphasize the fact that almost all newspapers in Egypt condemned the scheme and described it as "a new British manoeuvre to secure full British control and authority over the Sudan". Moreover, it was especially pointed out that, should Egypt accept to enter into negotiations with Britain on the basis laid down by the British scheme, she would by so doing ruin her whole national cause (Ikhwan al-Muslomin quoted by Zaman, 24.2., and Misri, 25.2.). "Misri" (24.2.) also wrote that the scheme was but an association of words to empower the Governor General with complete sovereignty over the Sudan. The Wafdist press, namely "Sawt al-Umma" (25.2.), violently took the Government to task and charged Nograshi with the sole responsibility for his policy of "fait accompli". The same newspaper also emphasized that the Governor General of the Sudan is but an Egyptian official. A similar remark was made by "Ahram" (25 and 25.2.). Only "Assas", the Saadist organ (Nograshi is the President of the Saadist Party) made a timid attempt to justify Nograshi's hesitations vis-a-vis the British scheme. It tried to explain that "since the British are still occupying the Sudan" it would be better to negotiate with them than to leave things as they are (Assas, 25.2.). Nograshi has been reported to have blamed the Sudanese for their haste to get rid of the British and to have stated that the Sudanese should not be impatient (Kutla, 27.2.). This report, however, was not confirmed by other sources.

At all events, it was becoming obvious that the Egyptian Cabinet had been seriously affected by the general opposition against the British scheme and that it would be compelled to reject it in view of the violent reaction of Egypt's political quarters (Misri, 25.2.). Egypt, it was reported, would also demand for a strict application of her constitutional rights (Akhor Sa'a, 25.2.). A draft answer by Egyptian experts rejecting the British proposals was reported to be already in preparation for dispatch to London (Ahram, 27.2.) and a new Egyptian scheme prepared instead (Zaman, 26.2.).

The British proposals were finally rejected by the Egyptian Cabinet (Router, 28.2.). Various political parties and associations, including the Liberal (Government Party) had previously stated their opposition to the scheme. The Senate Foreign Affairs Commission had also expressed the opinion that Egypt had erred by accepting to enter into negotiations with Britain on the Sudan question (Misri, 29.2.).

In view of the scarcity of information from the Sudan it is difficult to ascertain what has been the exact reaction of the Sudanese, particularly the British "Umma" Party, to the British proposals. It appears, however, that +

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been met with similar criticism as in Egypt. The Secretary General of the Sudanese Independent Party (Separatist) is even reported to have stated that the proposed legislation includes neither provisions for self-government nor for independence (R,25.2.). The Union of Sudanese students in Cairo issued a memorandum stating that they will fight "the imperialistic scheme" and appealed to the Egyptian to fight it, too (Kutla,25.2.). The President of the Ittihad (Sudanese Union) Party, denounced the scheme as an attempt to divide between Egypt and the Sudan (Misri,25.2.). A spokesman of the "Ashiqqa" Party (partisans of the Unity with Egypt) is also reported to have voiced his party's rejection of the proposed legislation (Ahram,27.2.).

Despite this outburst of criticism and protests, it was however feared that Britain would carry out the implementation of the scheme, even if Egypt rejected it (Misri,25.2.). "Ahram" (25.2.) also recalled that there had been precedents of legislation having been enforced in the Sudan without Egypt's consent.

Optimism seems to have prevailed for a while in London as to a favourable outcome of the proposed legislation. Well informed circles went even as far as to foresee a resumption of Anglo-Egyptian negotiations (Ahram,24.2.). It should be, however, emphasized that these reports were published before the Egyptian reactions to the British scheme were known in London. The Egyptian press' attitude was later described by the Cairo "Manchester Guardian" correspondent as "unencouraging" (Ahram,27.2.). Egyptian circles in London also stressed that the British proposals on the Sudan "were of a nature to bring new difficulties to Anglo-Egyptian relations" (Misri,29.2.). Still, the belief persisted that Britain would enforce the scheme as she wishes to keep control over the Sudan for strategic reasons connected with a general plan for the defence of Africa (Ahram,27.2.).

'IRAQ

Dissolution of the Chamber.

On the 25th February a Royal decree was issued by the Regent ordering the dissolution of the Chamber. It stated, inter alia, that "because of the present delicate circumstances which necessitate taking due measures to fulfil the desires of the nation.. it is imperative to ascertain the opinion of the nation..." (Ahram,26.2.).

One reason for the dissolution of the Chamber may be said to be the Cabinet's desire to meet another of the six demands, jointly advanced by the country's three parties on the day that the Cabinet was inaugurated (Ahram,26.2.). A second reason may be the desire of the Government to appear to the nation as being progressive, in that they removed all remnants of the Jabr period. Moreover, in view of a probable and seemingly much-desired settlement of relations with Britain (see below), it doubtlessly wanted to render impossible a recurrence of the recent "coup" which was instigated by unsatisfied parties and inadequately represented elements of the Chamber who agitated the populace to rise against the authorities.

Elections are to be held in two months and the new Chamber is expected to convene two months later (Ahram,26.2.). Prior to the elections a reshuffle of the Cabinet is anticipated in order to make it a coalition Cabinet by admitting into it National Democrats and Liberals (the Istiqlal is already represented by its President, Muhammad Mahdi Kubbeh, the Minister for Supply). Kamil Jadurji, President of the left-wing National Democrats stated that his party would only participate in the Government if its stipulated conditions were accepted, the main one presumably being the proportion of their participation. The Liberals have not as yet decided on the question of their participation (Misri,26.2.). The purpose of setting up a coalition Government is to ensure that elections will be conducted by a Government representing all parties (Ahram,23.2.). The dissolved Chamber was elected in 1947 under the administration of Premier Nuri Sa'id (Ahram,26.2.) and none of these parties was represented in it, the Liberals boycotting the elections, and the other two parties failing to gain any seats.

In view of the impending elections the "Constitutional Bloc" which was the Opposition of the dissolved Chamber, and comprised some 50 Deputies (out of a total of 140), is reorganizing itself into a new party to be called "the Constitutional Bloc Party". This nascent party is represented in the present Cabinet by Muhammad

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Ridha al-Shabibi the present Minister of Education, who headed it in the Chamber, and by Nasserat al-Farisi, Minister of State (Ahram,25.2.).

In the forthcoming election-campaign, the parties are expected to co-operate with each other by jointly allotting to themselves districts, especially those populated by tribes, in order to prevent independent candidates from gaining office (Ahram,26.2.).

Anglo- 'Iraqi Relations

On the 23rd February it was disclosed that the 'Iraqi Government had sent to Britain a memorandum explaining the reasons for the non-ratification of the Portsmouth Treaty. The memorandum asserted that the proposed Treaty was not in the interests of 'Iraq, since it did not call for the complete withdrawal of the British from the two airbases in Habbaniyah and Shaibah. Moreover, it granted Britain many financial and economic concessions. 'Iraq, furthermore, could not agree to the proposed joint Defense Board which was to be established as an executive and not merely a consultative body. Had it been accepted it would have meant in effect British control over 'Iraq's policy and public utilities. Finally the memorandum expressed 'Iraq's readiness to revise the 1930 Treaty in a manner guaranteeing 'Iraq's national aspiration (Misri, Assas(& AE),24.2.). The disposition to revise the Treaty is also to be found in two unofficial statements as follows: On 23rd February Nasserat al-Farisi, Minister of State, commenting on the British reply to the 'Iraqi rejection Note of the Portsmouth Treaty, said that 'Iraq, wishing to strengthen her friendship ties with Britain, very much desired to enter into new negotiations with her regarding the modification of the 1930 Treaty (Misri,24.2.). Similarly, Hamdi al-Pachachi, the Foreign Minister, on his return to Baghdad from the Arab League Council's session in Cairo, stated that since the 1930 Treaty does not suit 'Iraq at present she would not refuse to negotiate with Britain its modification (Ahram,26.2.). Both of these statements should be associated with a series of earlier ones (see our last issue) indicating the same trend.

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24.2.1948

No.23(50)

ARAB WORLD AFFAIRS

Weekly Survey

GENERALLeague Session Closed: Summary of Results.

Since the discussion on Palestine, the dominating feature of the session, was completed on the 17th, proceedings were expected to come to an end on the 19th. However, they dragged on until the 22nd, thereby extending it more than a period of a fortnight. This delay is presumably due to events in Yemen and possibly to the desire to ascertain the trends of discussions at the Security Council and act accordingly. The intervening days were filled by a review of the Libyan question, the situation in the Maghrib, with special reference to the Tetuan clashes and the alarming food shortage in Tunis, Lahaaj's request for admission to the League, the question of a unified oil policy as a weapon to fight Partition, the relations with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the question of joining the International Refugees Organization (I.R.O.), as well as a number of technical, legal and cultural problems. If we add to this the problems referred to in our previous issues, such as the question of an Anglo-Arab alliance, the Syro-Lebanese monetary dispute, the unification of currencies, the convening of an Asiatic Conference and Viet-nam's appeal for help, we will have a fairly complete picture of what the League anticipated dealing with.

It is obvious that the two week period allocated to cope with an agenda as pretentious and crowded as this falls far short of the actual need and cannot be expected to yield appreciable results. And indeed, none of the problems, with the exception of Palestine, was given a thorough treatment, let alone brought nearer to solution. They were either, a) referred to special committees (or respectively assigned to Governments for further study), as in the case of Iraq's proposal for the unification of currencies, the Asiatic Conference and Viet-nam's request or b) postponed until the coming session in March, as was the fate of the suggested Anglo-Arab alliance, the kindred problem of strengthening inter-Arab solidarity in the political and economic spheres, and the modifying of the League Charter or else c) some short term compromise was found or minor preliminary steps decided upon, as was the case with the Levant currency dispute, Libya and North Africa in general.

On the other hand, certain positive achievements should not be overlooked. As regards Palestine, to begin with, unanimous agreement is said to have been reached on all points discussed by the Political Committee (Misri, 18.2.), and all of them, 'Azzam assured the press, were of an "executive" (i.e. practical) nature (Misri, 17.2.), including a number of "secret" resolutions bearing on military, political and financial aspects (ibid). It was decided to centralize and coordinate defense measures and to insure an increased supply of arms and foodstuffs. To this end a three-man body was created (see our last issue), referred to by Emile Ghouri as the "Supreme Advisory Council", whose task it is to complement the varied (political and administrative) functions of the A.H.E. (Difa', 19.2.). By including the Mufti in this body, he was accorded full political status as the official representative of the Palestine Arabs on the League Council. It was also agreed to invite Jerusalem's Assistant Director of Supply to Cairo for consultations (Ahram, 17.2.). A plan for immediate military action was presumably drawn up by a conference convened by General Safwat in Cairo on the 21st and attended by Col. Shawkat Shuqair, the Lebanese representative on the Military Committee, 'Abdul Qader al-Husseini and Hassan Salameh. The Military Committee who met on the same day (Ahram, 22.2.), it should be noted, has been strengthened by the arrival in Damascus of its Transjordan member, 'Abdul Qader al-Jundi, Deputy Commander of the Arab Legion, who went at once to see Qawuqji (Falastin, 19.2.).

Although it had been previously stated that there was no intention to invade Palestine before the British withdrawal, the approaching discussion by the Security Council of the despatch of an international force to Palestine prompted the League spokesman to threaten immediate invasion by regular and other forces, should the Security Council decide on such a step. There is civil war in Palestine, 'Azzam

ENCLOSURE

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declared, and therefore no foreign State or group of States is permitted to intervene (Misri, 17.2.). Truman's personal appeal for restraint and preservation of peace in the Middle East does not seem to have produced any tempering effect. Pachachi, Mardam, 'Azzam and the Arab Legations in Cairo were eager to assure the public that they know nothing of it (Ahram, 17.2.), though - according to another report (V. 'Azam in Pal. Post, 18.2.) - the receipt of the message was confirmed on the 16th by the 'Iraqi Acting Foreign Minister, who had telephoned Pachachi for instructions concerning it. Pachachi even went so far as to saddle Truman with the responsibility for the disturbances in Palestine and threatened that they would not cease until Partition was abrogated and the Arab demands satisfied (Ahram, 16.2.).

Aside from the military measures, the Political Committee is said to have decided to recommend ten economic reprisal measures against States participating in the implementation of Partition, including, it is believed, the severance of economic relations (Difa', 17.2.). In this context the oil question presumably belongs. It was unanimously agreed that all member States should adopt a unified oil policy, with particular reference to the TAPline Company, and that this matter should not be discussed or decided upon without the consent of the rest of member States (Misri, 2.2.). This decision would not affect, however, existing oil concessions. In this connection, it should be noted that Aramco has reportedly offered to Syria, the author of the above move, a \$500 million loan. This is said to have been rejected, as well as a similar offer to Egypt (V. Azam in Pal. Post, 22.2.). Another step in a different direction is the strengthening of the anti-Zionist boycott. The League Secretariat has informed the Lebanon that the League's Boycott Committee would shortly visit that country as part of an inspection tour of the Arab Capitals (ANA, 18.2.).

A tangible achievement represents the temporary agreement (until March 31) mediated by 'Azzam and Yussuf Yassin (on instructions from Ibn Sa'ud) in the Syro-Lebanese monetary dispute, whereby both countries agreed to maintain for the specified period the free convertibility of their currencies for import-export purposes (see Lebanon).

The Political Committee also passed the Egyptian proposal for the establishment of a UN Bureau for the Middle East and issued the appropriate instructions to the Arab representatives on the UN Economic and Social Council. It stipulated, however, that the activities of the Bureau should be confined to the Middle East (including Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan) and exclude foreign Powers who have interests in this part of the world. The Bureau aims primarily at furthering commercial intercourse between the countries concerned (Ahram, 17.2.).

Lahej and the League.

The request of the Sultan of Lahej and Chief of the 'Abadila tribes, Shoikh Fadhl 'Abdul Karim, to grant his country representation on the Arab League, confronted the latter with a peculiar problem. It was opposed from the start by Yemen, which even objected to the compromise suggestion proposed to the League Council, to admit Lahej to a number of sub-committees, in accordance with the precedent set in the case of certain North African countries, which were granted representation on the Cultural Committee. The main reason for Yemen's refusal is that Lahej was not, as provided in the League Charter, an independent country, but one of the nine British dependencies in 'Aden Protectorate. The Yemeni delegate to the League, 'Ali al-Muayyad, took up the matter with the Egyptian Deputy Foreign Minister, Kamel 'Abdul Rahim and explained to him that Lahej was but an integral part of the Yemen but had been forcibly separated from it and that the Yemenites never recognized the legality of the British occupation, just as Egypt disowned Britain's claims to Sudan. He also submitted a detailed report, prepared by Najib Abu 'Izzeddin, on the political, legal and social conditions prevailing in the Protectorate. This report points out that the Sultan of Lahej receives from the 'Aden Government a monthly allowance of 1082 rupees plus an annual gratuity of 2100 rupees; that the number of its inhabitants does not exceed that of a single Cairo constituency; that the administration is controlled by a British Governor, Chief Secretary, Resident Advisor and Chief Justice; that all this is provided for in local agreements termed "treaties" by the Colonial office, which have been arbitrarily renewed since 1803 for a succession of years.

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The Egyptian Government accepted the viewpoint of Yemen and made endeavours to persuade the League delegates to prevent Lahej's joining the League committees (Misri, 18.2.). The matter came up before the Political Committee on the 18th and as a result, it was decided to defer the discussion to the March Session (Ahram, 19.2.).

League's Latest Worry: Yemen.

Special

The Yemenite coup d'Etat (for which see Issue) took the League Conference unawares. Although rumours of Imam Yahya's death and the establishment of a new Government headed by Seif ul-Haq Ibrahim, the Imam's 8th son, under the Imamate of 'Abdullah b. al-Wazir, have been set on foot since January 15, these events became a certainty only as late as the middle of February, when the new Imam cabled all Arab Kings and Rulers the news of his succession and Hussein al-Kobsi, the new Foreign Minister, cabled 'Azzam to come to the Yemen and see the "new structure erected by a democratic Government" (Ahram, 20.2.). King 'Abdullah, too, telephoned 'Azzam and urged him to respond Kobsi's call (Misri, 21.2.). Following this the Political Committee went into the question (on the 19th) and decided to despatch at once a fact-finding committee to Sana'a, as a preliminary step to sending a six-man committee, composed by representatives of all League member States and led by 'Azzam, for the purpose of "assisting Yemen in overcoming present difficulties". Sheikh Hassan Ibrahim, the Yemeni delegate to the Political Committee, suggested the choice of Gen. Isma'il Safwat for this job, since he was well acquainted with that country and - it was pointed out - a friend of the supporters of both the late Imam and his successor. It should be mentioned that Safwat spent the war-years 1939-42 in the Yemen, as Head of the 'Iraqi Military Mission for creating a Yemenite Army. However, Safwat excused himself because of his duties as C. in C. of the Palestine "Liberation Army". Therefore the following were appointed as "fact-finders": 'Abdul Mun'im, ^{Mustapha} Dr. Isma'il Hassan and Muhd. Mustapha Yassin, three Egyptian Foreign Ministry officials and Muhd. Saleh as-Sumari, a Yemenite notable resident in Cairo (Assas, 22.2.), accompanied by Yahya Isma'il al-Wadi'i, a Yemeni official of the Arab League. On the 21st the mission left for Sana'a by air.

EGYPT

British note to Egypt on "Sudanisation of Sudan".

Political activity in Egypt this week has shifted from purely Egyptian affairs to the Arab League's meetings, which dealt mainly with Palestine and incidentally with Libya (see General, Arab Affairs). Behind-the-scene activities, however, centred around the Sudan question. A British note, in reply to Egypt's request for a modification in the Sudanese regime, was reported to have been examined by the Egyptian Cabinet (Misri, 19.2.). The note which was published by the Foreign Office in London on the 21st proposed an Anglo-Egyptian Conference to revise ordinances for ruling the Sudan (AP, 21.2.). It stated that the revision should ensure that the ordinance provisions are truly in the interests of the Sudanese people and that it affords them the maximum degree of self-government consistent with their present stage of development (ibid.). Although the official reactions to the British note are not yet available, some Ministers were already reported to have reserved their opinion "until the British answer is officially discussed" (Misri, 19.2.). One of the greatest opponents to the Government's attitude in the Sudan question seems to be Hussein Heykal, the President of the Senate and Chairman of the Liberal Party. Heykal, it was stated, is of the opinion that the British policy on the Sudan is a mere screen for the maintenance of the present Sudanese regime, and that all British propositions should have been completely ignored by the Egyptian Government (Misri, 16.2.). Although the Liberals have taken no decision as yet on the British note (ibid.), their President, in a statement to "Rose al-Yussuf" (11.2.), recalled the fact that at the UN Nograshi had insisted on the British evacuation from Egypt as well as the Sudan. Heykal is also reported to have stated that "it would be inconsistent with Nograshi's statement, if Egypt enters into negotiations on reforms of a regime which she has previously asked to be annulled altogether (ibid.).

Available press reports seem to indicate that the differences between the Liberals and the Saadists (the two Government parties), were increasing. Apparently the leaders of both parties are pursuing efforts to maintain a united front against the Wafd. Heykal had appealed for more unity and warned that "new elections would

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result in the Government being held by one party" (meaning the Wafd) (Sawt al-Umma, 18.2.). In another statement, he also stressed the need for more political unity (Ahram, 19.2.). It is apparently in order not to provoke a split between the Liberals and the Saadists that the Egyptian Premier later expressed criticism of the projected British scheme (P.B.S., 23.2.).

Meanwhile, it was reported that the Sudanese delegation was to be reshuffled and all its members summoned to Cairo in order to follow the development of the talks concerning their country (Ahram, 18.2.). Isma'il al-Azhari, the leader of the Delegation, and a known supporter of the unity with Egypt, later stated at a meeting held by university graduates, that he was against the "Sudanisation" scheme (Ahram, 20.2.).

On the 19th of February the Sudan Government published in Khartum the text of a bill providing for the nationalisation of the Sudanese people (ANA, 19.2.). The bill, which is to be submitted to the Sudan Advisory Council on the 3rd of March, provides that people born in Sudan or permanently residing there, are entitled to become nationals of Sudan. The bill has been violently criticised by opposition parties in Egypt, and it was pointed out that, when enforced, Egyptians will have the status of "foreigners" vis-à-vis, the Sudanese (Kutla, 20.2.). "Sawt al-Umma", 19.2. described the bill as an important step towards the disunity of the Nile Valley, while the Wafd's General Secretary charged the Government with full responsibility for losing the Sudan (ibid.).

The Sudan question is expected to be fully exploited by the opposition in the coming days, and the Government will be obliged to follow the stream or else be confronted with a serious crisis. New developments should be awaited in any case before conclusively stating what the official reaction of the Egyptian Government will be towards the British proposal.

Government considers measures to combat Communism.

A bill aimed at checking the spread of communism has been prepared by the Egyptian Ministry of Interior, and a special Police Bureau to centralise information on Communist activities has been set up (J. d'E., 17.2.). The Government has been contemplating anti-Communist measures for a long time. In January, the Cabinet held a special meeting to discuss the question of Communist activities "which were apparent recently at the Fuad University and the Mahalla Textile Factories" (ANA, 27.1.).

As a matter of fact, the growing Communist influence has resulted in more frequent strikes and greater dissatisfaction openly expressed by workers and other social groups in Egypt. Hence, when commenting upon the proposed anti-Communist measures, the Wafdist press pointed out that it would have been better to deal with Communism either by putting an end to bribery amongst officials, checking high cost of living or by enforcing social reforms (Sawt al-Umma, Misri, 18.2.).

Attempts to minimize the Communist danger were previously made by "Ahram" which affirmed that Egypt was protected against Communism by her Islamic principles. The paper also concluded that Britain was only using the spectre of Communism to win support for her new policy in the Middle East (E.G., 29.1.). The "Ahram" allegations however are not entirely corroborated by facts. A recent poll in the Fuad University showed that 20% of the students favour Communism, 23% Socialism, while only 18% are for "Islamic Socialism" (Rose al-Yussuf, 4.2.). The same magazine also stated that "Communism has succeeded in convincing quite a large number of 'Al-Azhar' students". It went on to say that "Communist elements, which are numerous at 'Al-Azhar', are trying to sabotage religion in this country" (E.G., 19.1.). In a later issue it reported on a clash between Communists and members of the Moslem Brotherhood, in the Cairo religious institute (Rose al-Yussuf, 18.2.). Similarly "Assas" (20.2.), the mouthpiece of the Saadist party, in an editorial pointed out the existence of "a destructive force", which Egypt is determined to combat. The same qualification was also put by "Akhhbar al-Yom" (24.1.) which stressed that "it was useless to deny the existence of destructive extremist movements."

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It should be pointed out, however, that the Egyptian Government obviously differentiates between the local Communists and the U.S.S.R. or countries under U.S.S.R. influence. "Akhbar al-Yom" (14.2.) put it quite clearly when it wrote that "it is the Government's task to combat Communism in the country, but that this has nothing to do with Egypt's relations with the Eastern Bloc". Thus the Government is engaged in commercial talks with a Soviet mission, and has sent official representatives to Vienna, Bucarost, Budapest and Sofia (Misri, 22.2.).

Pending the enforcement of the new anti-Communist law, the Government appears to have stiffened its attitude towards alleged Communists. Those in custody, pending trial, are reported to suffer ill-treatment at the hands of the police and their defense council has lodged a protest to this effect (Sawt al-Umma, 17.2.). It is worthwhile mentioning that the pro-Government press have attempted to discriminate against local Communists by claiming that they were closely cooperating with the Wafd (Akhbar Sa'a, 30.1. & 11.2.). Other discriminating attempts also came from "Rose al-Yussuf" (18.2.) who alleged that several Egyptian Jews, in the ranks of the Communist party, are in fact more "Zionist agents".

Moslem Brothers store arms.

On the 20th of February, between 10.30 and 11 P.M., the Islamic Relations Office, Cairo, which belongs to the Moslem Brotherhood, was badly damaged by an explosion which shook buildings in an area of 10 kilometres (J. d'E., 21.2.). The Office was being used for a farewell party to 55 Moslem Brother volunteer from Suez, Alexandria and Fiqus before their departure for Palestine (Akhbar al-Yom, 21.2. & Ahram, 22.2.). Several persons were injured, amongst whom was the wife of the Mufti of Poland who lives in the same building (Misri, 22.2.). Among those who attended the banquet was Mahmud Labib, leader of the Brotherhood volunteer squads (Akhbar al-Yom, 21.2.), who escaped injuries. Hassan al-Banna expected to attend, apologised for not doing so and did not attend (J. d'E., 21.2.).

According to a police report following the investigations, a grenade went off accidentally exploding ammunitions stored in the building (ANA & R., 21.2.). Hassan al-Banna, when interrogated by the investigators said that two Palestine Arabs had requested his authorisation to keep explosive and blankets in the premises, and that he had agreed (Ahram, 22.2.). Further reports from the experts as to the cause of the explosion, considered the possibility of the explosives having been discharged as a result of the heat of the covering blankets (ibid.). These various semi-official reports did not prevent some newspapers from charging Zionists or Communists with the responsibility for the explosion. Thus "Akhbar al-Yom" (21.2.) wrote that police investigators believe that Zionists who succeeded in infiltrating into Egypt could be the plotters of the outrage. Similarly the same paper explained that Communists might also be the culprits as "difference of opinion had recently come out between Communists and Moslem Brothers on a planned demonstration on the occasion of the 21st of February".

These allegations of course were meant to divert public opinion. In any event, the accidental blowing up of the Moslem Brotherhood and Islamic Relations Office, is further testimony to the fact that the Moslem Brothers are storing arms and explosives in their various premises.

LEBANON AND SYRIA

Provisional Agreement.

Utilizing their meeting in Cairo, and under the pressure of 'Azzam Pasha, Jamil Mardam and Riyadh as-Sulh on the 18th February signed a provisional agreement, according to which free trade between the two countries will continue until the 31st March, and allowing that during the same period the currency of each country will be acceptable at the customs of the other. However, transfer of money between one country and the other will be subject to obtaining special permission from the respective Finance Ministers. The two parties further undertook to inaugurate negotiations concerning their Common Interests not later than the 15th March (Misri, 19.2.).

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Although this agreement gave rise to optimistic declarations by as-Sulh and Mardam in respect of future relations between Lebanon and Syria, it only represents a very temporary settlement of their relations designed to avoid chaos, which might prove harmful to both countries. In fact, even before the monetary issue the Common Interests Convention was extended to the 31st March. The present agreement corroborates the extension with some important limitations resultant from the separation of currencies. The agreement does not refer at all to the monetary problem, but recommends a final settlement of the economic issues between the two countries in the light of the separation of currencies.

The article providing for free trade between Syria and Lebanon, even for a period of one month as stated in the agreement, appears to be a serious handicap to Syria. It means that Syria's plan for procuring hard currency by blocking the Lebanese border and by retaining for overseas export all surplus products will be seriously affected. However, the Syrian Government may still circumvent this provision by hinting to Syrian exporters to withhold their transports to Lebanon.

'IRAQ

Relations with Britain.

Despite the statement made by a Foreign Office spokesman that Britain would not reply to the 'Iraqi ^{Note} Rejecting the Portsmouth Treaty (R.9.2.), it was disclosed by "Ahram" (17.2.) that Sir Henry Mack, British Ambassador to Baghdad, had submitted to the 'Iraqi Government Britain's reply. According to "Ahram", it allegedly stated that Britain considered the 1930 Treaty still valid and made it clear that as long as 'Iraq did not insist, Britain would not revise the Treaty. As regards the Portsmouth Treaty, the reply described it as being in the interests of 'Iraq, adding that the opposition against it and the riots ensuing from it resulted from a misunderstanding. This version of the reply is consistent with a further report concerning the Jabr-Bevin Treaty, to the effect that it was understood that for the moment there was no desire apparent in Whitehall to secure its ratification by the well-worn means used on previous occasions, the idea being to let the new Government stew in its own juice for a while (P.P., 20.2.).

"Misri" (22.2.), however, reported that the Baghdad paper "Al-Sa'a", which it described as being the mouthpiece of the present Government, wrote that the British reply, stressing Britain's desire to maintain peace in the M.E. and to continue her good relations with 'Iraq, stated that Britain was ready to enter new negotiations for the modification of the 1930 Treaty. Anyhow "Misri" (21.2.) reported that the Cabinet had prepared a response to the British reply.

It seems that regardless of the likelihood of a joint regional defence pact between the Arab states and Britain, the 'Iraqi Government and various political personalities have no wish to preclude the possibility of resuming bilateral negotiations with Britain aimed at modifying the old 1930 Treaty. To this end a good many statements have been made: Hamdi Pachachi, the Foreign Minister, disclosed that the 'Iraqi Note of rejection of the Portsmouth draft Treaty mentioned in addition that the 'Iraqi Government wanted soon to resume talks with Britain regarding the conclusion of a new Treaty (Ahram, 13.2.). He also told the "Daily Telegraph" correspondent in Cairo that 'Iraq would begin a series of new talks with the recently-appointed British Ambassador to Baghdad (Ahram, 10.2.). Similarly, Premier Muhammad al-Sadr told AP that the rejection of the Portsmouth Treaty would not affect friendly relations between 'Iraq and Britain as far as 'Iraq was concerned (Misri, 11.2.). Rida al-Shabibi, the present Minister of Education, when asked what was preferable from the 'Iraqi standpoint - the continuance of the 1930 Treaty or new negotiations - gave an evasive answer, while Daoud al-Haidari, Minister of State, when asked the same question, answered that he thought that the conclusion of a new treaty was of greater value to 'Iraq (Misri, 15.2.). Sheikh Mahdi Kubbeh, present Minister of Supply and President of the Istiqlal party, also asserted that the 1930 Treaty should be modified. In a like manner, Muhammad Hudaid, Vice-President of the National Democrat party stated that the rejection of the Portsmouth Treaty did not mean the acceptance of the 1930 Treaty (Ahram, 16.2.).

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A further indication that Iraq is relaxing her former attitude is provided by "Ahram's" report (16.2.) that although there is no sign of agreement to the idea of a joint defense board as projected in the Portsmouth Treaty (on this point the British mostly insisted), some circles would not object to its formation as a mere consultative body.

Nevertheless, some Iraqi circles are inclined to leave the 1930 Treaty unchanged until it expires in 1952, since Britain does not seem likely to make any further concession (Ahram, 18.2.).

In any case, from the assertion made by 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qassab, the Speaker of the Chamber, to the effect that the Iraqi nation by its very nature supports "Democracy" in its struggle with the Eastern Bloc (Ahram, 16.2.) it may be understood that Iraq still prefers British friendship with its limitations to absolute lack of commitment.

Before commencing new talks, the Iraqi Government will be obliged to wait until the disturbances in the country are quelled. Furthermore, all parties agree that new negotiations should be preceded by the dissolution of the Chamber, the election of a new one and the setting up of a strong coalition Government which would initiate new negotiations. In the event that Britain objected stubbornly to the modification of the Treaty Iraq might bring her complaint to the Security Council (Ahram, 18.2.).

Unmindful of Government deliberations, it appears that the Iraqi press have used a harsh tone against Britain, a fact which led the British Ambassador to lodge a protest with the Government, declaring that such a tone was inconsistent with the mutual friendship existing between the two states (Ahram, 16.2.). As a result of this protest (which was not affirmed in London official circles - "Misri", 17.2.), the press was asked to refrain from its attacks (Ahram, 16.2.). Another outburst of anti-British feelings was the attempt to sabotage water-pipes and electrical wires leading to the British airbase in Shaiba. Here too the Iraqi authorities intervened, the District Commissioner of Basrah declaring that those assets were the property of the Government and threatening the saboteurs with punishment (Assas, 20.2.). Furthermore, in demonstrations in Baghdad, Sulaimaniah, al-Hallah and Ramada touched off by the Cabinet decision to dissolve the Chamber (see below), the demonstrators shouted anti-British slogans and attacked British reading-rooms (Kutla, 21.2.).

Internal State of Affairs.

On the 17th February "Misri" reported that the Cabinet had adopted a resolution to dissolve the Chamber "because it does not represent the nation and was not properly elected" (Ahram, 20.2.). This decision was discussed by Premier Muhammad al-Sadr in his two-day visit to the Regent who is spending a vacation in Sursong, in northern Iraq (Kutla, 20.2.). The decision seems to be rather abrupt since the Chamber was adjourned for two months on 3rd February, after the new Government was constituted. In explanation of this measure it may be maintained that the Cabinet was provoked to this decision by growing pressure from those of its members who were neither members of the Senate nor of the Chamber, and by those who had alleged fraud in the last elections (such as the Istiqlal party). Senator Mahdi Kubbeh was reported the day before (Ahram, 16.2.) to have said that since his Istiqlal party had not acknowledged the legality of the Chamber it still insisted on its being dissolved as demanded in the joint manifestos of the parties.

Another explanation suggests that the dissolution aims at divesting the former ministers of their parliamentary immunity so that they may be tried on charges of responsibility for the bloodshed in the recent disturbances (Ahram, 19.2.).

That this is still an important problem may be concluded from the fact that in a meeting called by Premier Muhammad al-Sadr to discuss the situation, the principal demand of the leaders of the country's three parties, the National Democrats, the Liberals and the Istiqlal, was for the due punishment of those responsible for the bloodshed (Misri, 18.2.). In this connection it was reported that Jamal Bahan, Deputy of the former Premier, and Jamil 'Abd al-Wahhab, the former Minister for Social Affairs, repudiated any such responsibility saying that they had resigned

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from the Cabinet before the riots (Misri,17.2.). As for the ex-Premier Salah Jabr, it was decided to bring him back from abroad to face the investigation committee (Ahram,19.2.). It was later reported that the investigation/actually interrogated some former ministers and high-ranking officials (Misri,22.2.). /committee

It should be noted that should a minister be found responsible he will have to be tried by a high tribunal which, according to the 'Iraqi legislation, is to be presided over by the President of the Senate - Nuri Sa'id, who was a member of the former Cabinet and played an important role in the conclusion of the Portsmouth Treaty (ibid.). Accidentally, Nuri Sa'id was reported to be intending to leave Iraq for the purpose of settling in Turkey (Assas,20.2.). With relation to this issue it was rumoured that Jamil al-Madfa'i, present Minister of the Interior, had tendered his resignation, persisting with his opinion that all details about the recent disturbances should be kept secret (Misri,18.2.).

Unreliable as it may be, this rumour should be coupled with reports in Baghdad press about the infirm stand of the Government and the possible resignation of some of its members (Ahram,18.2.).

At last, in view of the imminent election-campaign, it may worth while mentioning that the Government allowed the existing political parties to set up branches throughout the country, something which was previously forbidden (Ahram, 16.2.).

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3.2.1948

No.20(46)

ARAB WORLD AFFAIRS

Weekly Survey

GENERAL

Inter-Arab Solidarity v. Britain?

It would appear that one of the keys to an understanding of the current crisis in Anglo-Arab relations lies with Egypt. This is not an altogether new conception. The Egyptian press, particularly that of the Opposition, has continually emphasized that there could be no question of Britain settling her problems with the rest of the Arab World as long as she persists in ignoring Egypt's fundamental demands and that any agreement reached with them was bound to founder on the Egyptian deadlock (see our issue No.18). But whereas this sort of talk could be dismissed, up to a very recent date, as mere propaganda and a bargaining device, since no tangible proof of real Arab backing for Egypt was evidenced, the 'Iraqi débâcle and the reported Syro-Lebanese negative attitude towards the British bilateral treaty offers to them and Sa'udi Arabia seem to indicate that Egyptian diplomatic pressure has been at work in the Arab Capitals. The causal nexus between it and the 'Iraqi ebullition must wait for further elucidation, but it is obvious that Egypt could not have looked on idly whilst an Arab League member State was negotiating a treaty which Egyptian public opinion regarded as a "stab in the back". It is significant, as "Sawt al-Umma" (28.1.) was eager to detect, that the Baghdad demonstrators, did not only clamour for British evacuation of 'Iraq but also of all Arab States and that reports from there, if we are to believe the same paper, show that Egypt and Palestine were among the factors which provoked the outbreak. It will also be remembered that the Lebanese proposal to Sa'udi Arabia and the tour to Riyadh and Cairo of Muhsin Barazi, stated to be the personal envoy of President Quwatli, was preceded (though not immediately) by the delivery of a secret dispatch from Farouq to the Presidents of the Levant States and Transjordan. The content of the message, it is generally stated, bears on Palestine or the fight against Communism, but persistent rumours have it that it is connected with the British defence plans for the Middle East (Musamarat, 1.2.).

Besides, the Lebanese demarche, it is said, was not confined to Sa'udi Arabia alone. It is reported that the Lebanon had proposed to the Arab League that the member States should conclude an inter-Arab military alliance which would prohibit the signing of separate agreements with non-members States before consulting, and obtaining the consent of, the other members and included a clause calling for the League Charter to be modified accordingly. This report was, however, denied by 'Azzam and Riadh Solh (Ahram, 29.1.). But this political move is said to have been followed by an economic one. According to "Assas" (29.1.) the Lebanese Govt. suggested to the League that a collective commercial agreement between the member States be conducted which would provide for (a) no commercial treaties liable to prejudice the interests of the League would be made between them and non-member States; (b) determining the economic relations between the League States and the principles of mutual supply and exchange of goods; (c) defining the attitude of the Arab States towards the anti-Zionist boycott and the economic policy decided upon by the recent Arab Premiers Conference in Cairo. This move may have been actuated by the widespread Lebanese dissatisfaction with existing economic relations with the Arab League States, as a result of (a) the boomerang effect of the anti-Zionist boycott on the Lebanese economy which the "sister" countries have consistently ignored and (b) the constant economic friction between the Lebanon and her Syrian neighbour culminating in the present quarrel over the question of remaining the franc area. These considerations, coupled with the political factors (e.g. the anti-British bias of the Maronites, see issue No.19) may also have ultimately prompted her to give practical evidence of her solidarity with Egypt.

An interesting feature which lends further support to the hypothesis of partial Egyptian authorship of the Arab reactions mentioned above, are the conclusions arrived at by a committee recently set up by the Egyptian Foreign Ministry for the "co-ordination of Egyptian foreign policy". This committee has met several times during the past three weeks and is understood to have formulated the following principles in its report to the Ministry: a) The restriction of Egyptian policy to its narrow local framework cannot realise Egypt's aspirations b) Since Egypt has made the Arab League the axis of

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her policy in the international arena, she must direct public opinion in Egypt and the neighbouring countries towards the unification of the Arab political plans and their external problems for the purpose of setting up an Arab solidarity bloc vis-à-vis the foreign Powers in general, and Britain in particular. It follows from the "collective" policy that urgent steps should be taken to thwart Britain's attempts to conclude separate agreements with the Arab States and to imbue them with the conviction that any agreement of this nature is but an axe for undermining the League Charter and the Arab bloc policy. The political exigencies compel Egypt to declare that she will reject any proposal which is not based on a joint settlement of the relations between Britain and the Arab States as a whole, this declaration must be freely endorsed by the League members. Conversely, no members will sign any agreement which is not part of a general settlement with Egypt and the Arab East. Britain's contention that she must be responsible for the security of the Middle East cannot serve as a basis for an agreement, since the security of this area is the sole responsibility of its peoples, provided they are given the necessary material means, and furthermore it depends on the extent of their confidence in Britain which in turn is dependent on Britain's willingness to recognize their claims and to remove the restrictions on arms and the raising of this social standards produced by Britain's political domination (Difa', 29.1.1949 Egypt).

These principles are not likely to come as surprise to the rest of Arab States, and indeed may have been influenced by previous consultations with them. According to "Al-Nahdha" (29.1.) the Arab leaders had discussed (at the Premiers' Conference) the problem of "piecemeal settlements", and had decided against them, more specifically, against any military treaty made before Britain had come to an understanding with Egypt.

This new orientation of Egypt implies, it would seem, that she has finally despaired of reaching single-handed a satisfactory solution of her problems with Britain. And this conviction, we are told by Jon Kimche (Pal. Post, 1.2.), is shared by the British. It there has ever been a glimmer of hope for a compromise, the repudiation of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty and the fate of its 'Iraqi signatory has extinguished it, as they will doubtless act on Nograshi as a most effective deterrent. It is not a question of the terms proposed by Britain, says the "Manchester Guardian", (quoted by Kutla, 31.1.) because any terms and any concessions to Britain will be rejected by the Arab People and there are very few Arab leaders whose position is so strong that they can dare to brave their peoples' wrath. As a result, Kimche reports, an alternate plan is being gradually developed. It envisages formation of a defence bloc which would include Iraq, Transjordan, Sa'udi Arabia and Syria, with Pakistan to supplant Egypt and to assume the leadership of the bloc; as a consequence, it is presumed, Egypt would be politically isolated and its influence in the Arab League weakened. Significantly enough, the Lebanon has been left out of the scheme (see above). Syria is to be won for the new plan by Britain's abandoning the Greater Syria scheme and Transjordan compensated for the latter by changes in her treaty with Britain and a more generous subsidy from the British Treasury. Mr. Marshall is said to have given assurances of the fullest American support for the scheme.

That such a plan could have been maintained in spite of the 'Iraqi setback presupposes a considerable degree of optimism regarding future relations with Iraq. As far as treaty relations with the four Arab States specified above are concerned there is much to warrant such an outlook. As to Syria, the separation of her currency from the franc (see Syria), is likely to open up a wide field of economic cooperation with the sterling and dollar area. This, in addition to her hitherto friendly attitude towards Britain and the latter's concessions regarding Greater Syria may very well induce her ultimately (in spite of her reported refusal, see above) to join the British camp. As a powerful stimulus in this direction may serve Ibn Sa'ud's stand. And here things look rather hopeful for Britain. The talks which had originally taken place at Riyadh between Ibn Sa'ud and the British Ambassador there, are stated by Hafez Wahba, the Sa'udi Ambassador to London, to be progressing and are expected to continue in London shortly (Misri, 3.1.). Regarding Transjordan Mr. Bevin is expected to meet the wish of the former's Government for a general revision of the Anglo-Transjordan Treaty, as well as of its military annex (R., 3.2.). Thus a situation may be created soon whereby Iraq would be surrounded by a ring of British allies powerfully backed by the U.S.A.

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EGYPTExternal Situation

The Egyptian press agrees almost unanimously that the 'Iraqi fiasco has for the time being ruined the chances for resuming Anglo-Egyptian negotiations. The press continues to extol the "revolutionary movement" of the 'Iraqi people, "who have foiled the Imperialistic designs of Britain" (Ahram, 28.1; Zaman, 29.1; Mussamarat, 1.2.etc.). "Rose el-Youssef" (28.1.) simply asserts that political circles in Egypt rejoiced at the British failure, because they had feared they would have to follow 'Iraq's example. "Misri" (28.1.) carried a report that a recently established "committee for co-ordinating Egyptian foreign policy", headed by Kamil Abdur-Rahim, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs had decided among other things to recommend a more closer co-ordination of the policy of the Arab League States, designed to "frustrate the British plans of contracting separate treaties with the Arab States". Although in the following day the Foreign Ministry published an express denial of this report (Misri, 29.1.), it seems that the Egyptian Government views with disfavour any immediate resumption of the negotiations, as long as such negotiations could be construed as an acceptance of the British demands for a common defence scheme. There were reports that the U.S. was supporting Britain and opposing unconditional withdrawal (Akhar al-Yom, 24.1.), that were denied by a British Foreign Office spokesman (Misri, 31.1.).

In this connection, it should be noted that some prominent personalities like Hafez Ramadan, 'Aziz al-Masri, 'Ali 'Alluba have openly declared that Egypt should at present join neither of the two world blocs and in the event of war should remain neutral. Masri added that she could ultimately join the stronger bloc, while Saleh Harb advocated a pro-Western orientation dependent on complete evacuation, "otherwise we might even join the devil" (Akhar Sa'a, 29.1; Mussawar, 30.1.). Objection to a special treaty with Britain on the ground that it would naturally be construed by Russia as directed against her, were voiced by "Mussawwar" (23.1.). Mahmud Ghannam, Deputy-Secretary of the Wafd, even stated that Egypt should orientate its policy in the light of the stand taken by the Powers in considering the case before the Security Council, e.g. a tentative suggestion of a pro-Russian attitude, whereas "Sawt al-Umma" (31.1.) attacked the Government for participating in the Havana Economic Conference which is regarded as "an additional step towards joining the western bloc."

The cautious remarks of Sir Ronald Campbell, who returned to Egypt on the 30th January, further confirms the view that negotiations will not be resumed in the near future. He said that his task was to remove difficulties preventing a final agreement and that Mr. Bevin still hoped that such an agreement was possible. He had now come to convey to Egypt the opinion of London on this matter after he had fulfilled the corresponding task in London. But members of his entourage declared that it was highly improbable that negotiations would be resumed in the near future (Misri, 31.1.).

Britain Replies to Egyptian Note on Sudan

The constitutional future of the Sudan remains therefore the only problem on which direct Anglo-Egyptian contact exists. "Zaman" reported on the 29th that a note containing the British reply to the recent Egyptian note on the constitutional reforms in the Sudan had been delivered to 'Amr in London and forwarded by him to the Egyptian Government. The paper asserts that the British had stated in this note that "since the Sudanese Government could not again postpone its scheme of "Sudanization" in conformity with the demands of the Sudanese people, the scheme would be submitted to the Sudanese Advisory Council in its forthcoming session in March. The British however proposed the formation of a committee composed of two British and two Egyptian members, neither of whom was to be an official, to study this scheme and suggest modifications which would be submitted to the Advisory Council. The Governor-General would be requested to consult the British and the Egyptian Governments before taking political, constitutional and international steps. This has been generally confirmed by "Misri" (1.2; 2.2.) whose reports do not contain the last provision but add that the Governor-General himself should formulate a new scheme, to be submitted to the combined commission, the non-official character of which was stressed.

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If these reports are correct, and they correspond to early British reaction describing the Egyptian proposals as "irreal and too far-reaching, liable to impede the implementation of the whole scheme" (Economist, Ahram, 26.1.), then the Egyptian proposal set forth in their last note have not been met at all, but the door has been left open for further negotiations. It should be borne in mind, too, that there were unconfirmed reports that Egypt has also proposed the formation of a mixed committee that would include Sudanese representatives to study the various suggested schemes.

The fact that a British reply to the Egyptian note on the constitutional reforms in the Sudan had been delivered was confirmed by Nograshi himself, who stated that the advisory body of the Cabinet was studying it (Ahram, 1.2.). "Misri" (1.2.) reports this matter will be the main topic of the forthcoming talks between Nograshi and Campbell. London circles are optimistic about the outcome of these talks. Nograshi has again stated his conciliatory policy in this respect, when, in answering interpellations in the Chamber on the Sudanese problem he accepted full responsibility for the Egyptian Government's complete support of Sudanese self-government and failed to indicate the Government's attitude to the Sudanese Governor-General's recent anti-Egyptian steps (Ahram, 28.1.).

Trade Talks with Russia

A Russian trade mission, headed by M. Menchekoff, Deputy Commissar for Foreign Trade, is now conducting talks in Cairo. There was a great deal of preliminary contact in November-December 1947 (Misri, 27.1.; Assas, 30.1., see also our issue 14 (41)), till the official Russian delegation finally arrived, on the 24th January (Misri, 26.1.). Nograshi in reply to a question raised in the Senate by a Wafdist Senator, regarding the severance of trade relations between Egypt and Russia, stated that the Egyptian Government did not spare efforts to strengthen economic relations with other states, among them Soviet Russia. "Misri" had previously (24.1.) published an article calling on the Government to foster trade relations with Russia.

The Russians are willing to buy about 100,000 tons of Egyptian long staple cotton, whereas Egypt is mainly interested in Russian wheat, owing to the serious wheat shortage (see our last issue No. 18 (45)). Egypt will receive about 150,000 tons and there were also reports that the Soviets might supply barley, wood and paper if demands for Russian kerosine were refused (Misri, 26.1.; 27.1.; Assas, 30.1.). The main difficulty encountered in these talks is the fixing of the prices of goods to be delivered by both sides. Since the cotton is valued at much more than the wheat, Russia will have to pay an additional sum to Egypt. There are also differences that must be reckoned with in the currency exchange (J. d'E. 1.2; Misri, 29.1.). There are also reports that Egypt is about to sign a financial agreement with Rumania. Since Egyptian debts in Rumania were frozen during the war, Egyptian importers from Rumania were required to deposit 90% of their payments to Rumania in Egypt. This state of affairs has considerably hampered trade between the two countries. The new agreement would settle these accounts and encourage mutual trade (Misri, 17.1.). It is reported that Egypt has sent an envoy to Bulgaria to prepare for restoration of normal relations between the two countries (Misri, 12.1.). "Ahram" (29.1.) reports that Yugoslavia will sell 20,000 tons of maize to Egypt. This would considerably improve the grave food situation that exists in Egypt. Trade talks with Norway have broken down. The Norwegians asked for cotton in return for the sale of fish, whereas the Egyptians demanded wood and paper (Ahram, 1.2.).

Egypt Demands Evacuation of Poles and Yugoslavs

The Egyptian Government has strongly demanded the evacuation within a three months period of Polish and Yugoslav troops stationed in the Canal Zone by the British (Ahram, 28.1.). These troops had been there ever since the war and have refused to be repatriated. The Egyptian Government had protested strongly to Mr. Chapman-Andrews against retaining them in Egypt (A.P., 28.1.). Although London did not confirm these reports ANA (29.1.) disclosed that the first steps to evacuating them were actually being taken. There were 600 Yugoslavs there, six of whom are wanted by the Yugoslav Government as war criminals. Both the Poles and the Yugoslavs are of course opponents of the present regime in those countries (Ahram, 1.2.). "Sawt al-Umma" (31.1.) demands an official statement on the matter.

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Communism Spreading in Egypt

The Egyptian authorities seem to be much concerned by the spreading of what is described as "Communist ideas" in the country. The social unrest which prevails now in Egypt is apparently cleverly exploited by leftist groups. In Parliament, a deputy urged the Government to check the rising cost of living in order to avoid the spreading of Communist principles (Sawt al-Umma, 20.1.). It appears, however, that Communist principles have already spread to several classes of the population. Even in London, left wing activities of Egyptian students were reported, and the Egyptian Ambassador was requested by his Government "to take action" (E.G., 26.12.47). The Egyptian Government is reported considering the introduction of an amendment to the criminal legislation in order to permit the punishment of Communist elements (Mussawar, 30.1.). Due to the lack of proper legislation, alleged Communists arrested have so far been released after their cases were brought to the Court.

Despite a press campaign pointing out that Communism is in contradiction to Islam (Kutla, 16.1.), there were several reports that it has spread to the religious Azhar faculty (Rosa el-Yussef, 28.1.), while other reports disclose that students in the Egyptian University had shouted "Communism above Islam" (Mussawar, 30.1.).

The stronghold of Communism in Egypt seems however to be centered in industrial workers of the Mohalla el-Kobra textile manufactures. A few days before the elections of the Mohalla trade unions committees were due, the Under Secretary of Social Affairs and the Director of Public Security held a meeting to discuss the situation in Mohalla el-Kobra (Ahram, 16.1.). Following that meeting, police and army contingents were sent to Mohalla el-Kobra and wide searches "for Communists" were carried out. As a result, 60 workers were reported to have been arrested and a considerable amount of Communist propaganda material alleged to have been seized (Sawt al-Umma, 23.1.). The searches and arrests continued for days afterwards, bringing the total number of workers arrested to 72 (Sawt al-Umma, 25.1.). They will all be brought to trial charged with perpetrating "activities aiming at overthrowing the present constitutional regime" (Sawt al-Umma, 25.1.).

SUDANNile Valley Remains United

The split among the pro-Unity of the Nile Valley parties continues (see our issue No. 15(42)). Attempts were made by an Egyptian deputy visiting the Sudan (Ahram, 5.1.), a body of independent leaders (Ahram, 7.1.) and by the Students' Union (Misri, 17.1.) to bridge the gulf between the Ashiqqa and the Graduates' Congress which is dominated by the Ashiqqa party and between the other three Federalist parties: the Federalists, the liberals and the Unity of the Nile Valley party. But all these attempts failed because the two sides could not agree on the composition of the new body which was to direct the activities of the united front, nor could they agree on the re-constructed Sudanese delegation in Egypt, which now is composed only of representatives of the Ashiqqa and one independent member - Ahmad Khair, who opposes their policy (The Ashiqqa generally support Noqrashi, while evincing pro-Wafdist leanings (Ahram, 9.1.)).

Both sides also differed on the competence of the new body, the Ashiqqa demanding that the political function of the Graduates Convention, "the cradle of the movement", should be maintained, while the other three parties demanded that the new body should be empowered to make political decisions (Misri, 11.1; 26.1.). Both sides are unwilling to compromise; the Ashiqqa who are the largest party are unwilling to forgo their dominant position, while the other parties are determined to refuse any proposal which would give the Ashiqqa a majority in the new bodies to be constituted. They accuse this party and its leader Isma'il al-Azhari, of having monopolised all external political activities of the pro-Unity of Nile Valley movement (Misri, 19.1; 22.1.).

Meanwhile the Ashiqqa have again proved their hold on the Graduates' Convention as indicated by the results of the election to its local branches. They emerged with a complete victory (Kutla, 20.1; 30.1.). In the pro-Unity of Nile Valley movement this party has remained dominant.

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Preparations for Legislative Assembly

The Sudanese Government continues to make actual preparations for the elections of the Legislative Assembly provided for in the new constitutional scheme for the Sudan, although no final agreement has as yet been reached between Egypt and Britain on this matter (see above). The Council of the Northern Districts has already taken actual steps in preparation for the elections and the choice of candidates (Misri, 13.1.). The Public Relations Office of the Sudanese Government has announced that the district governors are consulting local leaders and officers on the elections (Sawt al-Umma, 19.1.). These governors were instructed to prepare suggested methods of indirect elections for rural districts, and for the district of Darfur. Candidates had already been nominated (Misri, 25.1.). "Kutla" (29.1.) even reported that Nograshi had agreed to these steps and that the Independents had definitely decided to participate in the elections, Federalists possibly, also.

The Independence Front has however published a statement in which they demand several modifications in the constitutional scheme prepared by the Sudanese administration before they could agree to participate in the Legislative Assembly. They demand that the Assembly should represent both the Northern and the Southern part of the Sudan. The executive council which should include Sudanese should be responsible to the Assembly. After three years the condominium should be permanently terminated and the Sudanese be free to determine their destiny (ANA, 25.1.). These demands are very similar to the modified demands submitted by Egypt.

While the Independents are thus still reserving their comments and the pro-Unity of Nile Valley supporters have declared they would boycott the Assembly, the two religious factions, the followers of the Mahdi family - the Ansar, and the followers of Mirghani the Khatamiya, are reported to be ready to participate in the elections. But their participation depends on the new "Assembly really constituting a Parliamentary body" (Sawt al-Umma, 9.1; Ahram, 20.1.). Since the two factions are more important in the whole of the Sudan than the political parties, which are important only in the towns, their support may be decisive.

A delegation of the supporters of the Mahdi family is now touring the western Sudan where most of the inhabitants are their followers. The tour was undertaken as soon as the Government lifted the ban imposed on the family 30 years ago prohibiting their visiting that area (Ahram, 23.1.). Western Sudan is very important, its inhabitants numbering 3 millions out of 6-7 million inhabitant of the Sudan. This visit is only a preparatory step to the visit of Sir Abdur Rahman al-Mahdi himself. Importance is placed on the fact that Sir Robert Howe simultaneously is visiting this area (ibid.). These activities may be connected with preparations for the Legislative Assembly, for the Federalists have also demanded permission to visit this area (Ahram, 18.1.). "Mussamarat al-Jaib" (1.2.) reported that the pro-Unity bodies contemplate a series of visits to the various parts of the country for the purpose of conducting a campaign to boycott the Assembly.

Reaction to mooted Anglo-Egyptian Talks

The reactions to the mooted Anglo-Egyptian preliminary talks on the Sudan are generally unfavourable. The pro-Egyptian parties are against Egypt's concessions to the Unity of the Nile Valley scheme (Ahram, 11.1; Sawt al-Umma, 30.1.), whereas the Independents fear that the concessions "will be at the cost of the Sudan", thereby prolonging the condominium indefinitely. They have demanded an invitation to the talks and proposed the formation of a united body to be representative of the country (Ahram, 16.1.). The representative of the independent Umma party Ya'qub Uthman has accordingly returned to London to watch the developments (Ahram, 17.1.). The Independence front has also notified Mr. Bowland Nograshi that any agreement which would ignore Sudanese Independence would not be recognized (ANA, 25.1.). The Sudanese Government has however re-affirmed that the Sudanese would be consulted prior to the taking of a final decision (Ahram, 27.1.). The failure of the Iraqi treaty has thus been welcomed by all parties concerned, as a serious impediment to Anglo-Egyptian talks (Kutla, 28.1.).

There are conflicting reports on the present attitude to Egypt of the Independents. "Mussawar" (9.1.) alleged that they persisted in demanding complete reparation from Egypt, whereas other reports maintain (Ahram, 14.1; Assas, 31.1.) that the present Egyptian policy supporting the granting of wide self-government to the Sudanese, as re-affirmed by Nograshi on many occasions (for the last one

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(see above) has created amongst them many sympathies for Egypt. This fact has been stressed by Noqrashi too who indicated his satisfaction with the success of the new Egyptian policy towards the Sudan (Ahram, 28.1.). "Kutla" (31.1.) reported that the Independents have construed this policy to be an abandonment of the demand for the immediate Unity of the Nile Valley and the recognition by Egypt of the Sudan's right of self-determination. The mouthpiece of the Umma party has attacked the British for their "false imperialistic support of the Sudanese Independence Front which is motivated by ulterior selfish aims" (Sawt al-Umma, 27.1.). All in all, it seems that the Egyptian policy has somewhat succeeded in allaying the fears of the Independents that Egypt wanted to dominate the Sudan, and this success has been stressed several times by Noqrashi. On the other hand, the objection of the Unity of Nile Valley parties to this policy will only serve to strengthen Egypt's position, since it can now be claimed that she demands less for herself in the field of immediate Unity with the Sudan, than to the political bodies in the Sudan. All these matters will be clarified when the new developments of the Sudanese question (see above) will become more clear.

Railway Workers Stage Warning Strike

On the 26th January the Sudanese railway workers staged a three day warning strike, after their demands for increased wages had been refused by the Government. All communications were disrupted and Egypt was severed from the Sudan. There was no postal service either (Ahram, 27, 28.1.). Although the workers occupied the premises, there were no disturbances, and on the 29th work was resumed (Ahram, 30.1.). Trade-unions in the Sudan are generally not recognized and this factor has caused much unrest among the workers. In the last year the Government refused the demand of the railway workers - the bulk of Sudanese workers - to recognize their union. The workers struck and the Government was obliged to recognize their union. Their demands for increased wages was however refused but they were promised that the matter would be re-considered at the end of February (Zaman, 31.1.). The workers have threatened to go on strike indefinitely if this re-consideration should fail to moot their demands.

SYRIA AND LEBANON

Separation of Currency.

The effects of Syria's withdrawal from the franc area will be more perceptible by far in Lebanese-Syrian than in Franco-Syrian relations. While the links between Syria and France have long since been limited to the technical attachment of the Syrian pound to the French franc, the very basis of the Syrian-Lebanese "common interests" is stultified by the separation of Syria's currency from that of Lebanon.

Following the devaluation of the franc a speedy settlement of the relations between the three countries' currencies was imperative in order to forestall gross speculation. The French fixed the 1st February as the ultimate date for winding-up negotiations and signing an agreement. The Syrian Government asked 15 additional days in an effort to mitigate the economical and cultural concessions demanded by France in return for the guarantee of the Syrian-Lebanese currency, but the French insisted on the 1st February (Ahram, 2.2.). After two meetings between the Syrian and Lebanese Presidents and Governments on the 27th and the 31st January - at which time the Syrians vainly tried to persuade the Lebanese to join them in rejecting the French proposals, it was formally announced in the evening of the 31st January that Syria withdrew from the franc area as from the 1st February and would institute a "national currency" to be issued by a "national bank".

According to the provisional agreement of the 26th January - immediately after the franc devaluation - the Lebanese pound retained its former value in respect to the pound sterling and dollar (i.e., 883 Lebanese piastres to £1, and 219 to \$1), the franc equivalent thereby being increased by 80 per cent, i.e., from 54 to 97 francs to LL.1. Whether the French accordingly increased the franc cover of the Lebanese currency was another question, which could be answered only when the provisions of the new Franco-Lebanese agreement (due to be signed next week by the Lebanese Foreign Minister who is now in Paris - "Ahram", 2.2.) are made public.

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The reasons for the differing reactions of Syria and Lebanon are obvious. Syria was actuated by the deep rooted hatred to France rather than by purely economical considerations. But apart from such an antagonism, Syria was by far better able than the Lebanon to renounce the backing of the French Treasury. Whereas the Lebanon is mainly an import country, Syria exports a considerable number of items, particularly agricultural products, and can therefore, to a certain extent, equalize the lack of gold and hard currency necessary to guarantee a self-maintained currency. In the Lebanon, on the other hand, the loss of France's guarantee would immediately entail a sweeping inflation with incalculable results. During the Syrian-Lebanese negotiations, prior to the announcement of Syria's withdrawal, the Syrians proposed that the economical resources of both countries should be merged and the hard currency equally distributed (Misri, 1.2). The Lebanese, however, were disinclined to enter upon this arrangement in view of Syria's unencouraging attitude towards the Lebanon during former crises.

As it now stands, the Syrian Government intends to set up a National Bank (with the shares to be held either by both the Government and inhabitants, or exclusively by the Government), which will have the privilege of issuing currency. Forty per cent. of the paper currency is to be guaranteed in gold (Misri, 1.2), and the rest "by a healthy export-import policy" (AP, 1.2). It appears, however, that there is a good deal of confusion among Syrian statesmen with regard to the new status of Syrian currency, and as late as the 26th January, Prime Minister Jamil Mardam declared that the Syrian pound could easily dispense with France's backing since it was guaranteed by the International Monetary Fund... (Hayat, 27.1.). (The paper money circulation in Syria having been about LS.200,000,000 - equivalent to almost 100,000,000 dollars - and Syria's contribution to the Fund being 6,500,000 dollars, the Fund, consequently, could guarantee only some LS.4,000,000 of her paper money, i.e. one-fourth of the amount deposited by Syria.)

On the other hand, "Sharq" reported on the 27th January that Syria will ask America to borrow gold from her to be guaranteed by Syrian Government Lands. Whatever the case, Syria is henceforth more than ever dependent on the goodwill of America. She will further be confronted with the same problem which Egypt faces, keeping local gold from "flooding" abroad.

The economical relations between Syria and the Lebanon will have to undergo a sweeping revision following the separation of the two countries' currencies. Once the uniformity of currency, which formed the basis of the Common Interests Convention, is abrogated, it is hardly imaginable that other provisions - such as a common customs system and free transports between the two countries - could be maintained. In fact, the validity of the Common Interests Convention expired on the 1st January, 1948, but was extended for three months more pending the settlement of the issue with France.

The political implications of the new situation cannot as yet be indicated. The Syrian Minister in Paris expressed to "Ahram" (2.2.) his confidence that the political relations between Syria and Lebanon would not be prejudiced by their economical separation. On the other hand, "Misri" (1.2.) reports from Beirut that the signing of a Franco-Lebanese Agreement is considered there as a victory of the pro-French elements and a defeat of the pan-Arab (ipso facto, anti-French) circles, now at the helm.

TRANSJORDAN

Anglo-Transjordan Talks Begin

On the 26th January the Transjordan delegation and the British Foreign Secretary began talks for the revision of the Anglo-Transjordan Treaty of 1946. The Transjordan delegates are reported to have expressed their desire to revise the military appendix to the Treaty, and the British to have shown their willingness to listen favourably to the Transjordan demands (Ahram, 27.1.). Bevin, who was apparently upset by his 'Iraqi setback, resumed his interrupted vacation after the first interview, leaving Foreign Office officials to continue the talks. The Transjordan delegation felt that it has arrived in London at a particularly critical time owing to the complication that had occurred with reference to the 'Iraqi question (Ahram, 27.1.). It appears obvious that the delegation wanted to discuss more than military matters, as first reported, and that its main object would be to

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secure to Transjordan, through an entirely new agreement with Britain, a status similar to that enjoyed by other Arab States. Official British circles were therefore not surprised when Tawfiq Abul-Huda suggested that it was his intention to revise the whole Anglo-Transjordan Treaty together with its annexes (ANA,27.1.). The Transjordan delegation was even reported to have had a draft treaty ready (R.,28.1.), as a basis of discussion.

Preliminary talks to this effect, it has been disclosed, were heated, as the Transjordan delegation encountered difficulties in convincing the British of the soundness of their claims (ANA,31.1.). Tawfiq Abul-Huda seems to have adopted a very firm stand and to have been ready to return to 'Amman without reaching an agreement rather than sacrifice the essential Transjordan demands (ANA,31.1.). It can also be assumed that the Transjordan Premier wished above all to avoid signing a Treaty destined to undergo the same fate as the new Anglo-'Iraqi pact, especially as strong opposition to the talks had already been voiced by Transjordan political refugees and students in Damascus. The latter had cabled to King 'Abdullah that the Transjordan delegation did not represent the Transjordan people, who wanted real independence, complete British evacuation and the revision of the Constitution (ANA,25.1.). At any rate the argument put forward by the Transjordan delegation in London in favour of the complete revision of the Treaty with Britain was that some clauses, especially those allowing Britain to station troops anywhere in Transjordan, "had influenced the Russians in vetoing Transjordan admission to the U.N." (R.,28.1.).

It was strongly felt by the Transjordan delegates that Bevin would hesitate to reject the Transjordan demands at a moment when her plans to launch a new treaty system linking Britain with the Arab World (R.,28.1.). In view of the importance of the talks, it was reported that he would take over the entire question from the Foreign Office officials (ANA,31.1.). It is worthwhile mentioning a comment by ANA pointing out that Bevin's pro-Arab policy would render him tolerant in discussing the Transjordan demands and that "he would not entertain a policy which may cause the weakening of the Arab League structure" (ANA,27.1.).

According to various press reports the talks proceeding since the 26th of January between the two delegations deal with the position of the Arab Legion, the Middle East situation and Palestine (ANA,27.1.). Two major problems around which the talks were supposed to centre were the future of the British-controlled Arab Legion and financial relations between the two States (ANA,31.1.). The Transjordan Premier also disclosed at a press conference that one of the subjects of the discussions was "Bevin's proposal for a joint Middle East Defence Board in which Transjordan was to participate" (R.,27.1.). This was one of the important modifications Britain wanted to include in the Treaty under revision (ANA,30.1.).

The question of the Arab Legion was apparently an internal affair between Glubb Pasha and the British Government. Talks between Glubb and the War Office, it was believed, would result in the return of the Arab Legion to Transjordan territory (R. & PTA,27.1.), although Tawfiq Abul-Huda affirmed that "it is premature to say what the Legion will do after the British withdrawal". He made it clear, however, that the command of the Legion after the British withdrawal would be transferred to the General Command in Transjordan (ANA,27.1.). Reports that the chief question discussed with regard to the Arab Legion was whether the force should be placed under the control of the Arab League or remain exclusively at King 'Abdullah's disposal (P.P.,29.1.), were not authoritatively confirmed. It is highly probable that the question of the Legion has been settled with Glubb Pasha, who was reported to be making preparations to return to 'Amman (Ahram,2.2.). The Transjordan delegation, however, has presumably heard Britain's views on the probable outcome of the current conflict in Palestine and, according to the "Palestine Post" correspondent in London, the impression gained is that 'Amman will retain some latitude regarding Partition but will be asked to cooperate more closely with the League on larger issues (P.P.,29.1.). This view is partly confirmed by a statement by the Transjordan Premier that "part of the Arab Legion will be withdrawn when the British evacuate" (AP,26.1.), and that "the Arab League has not yet decided to use its armies in Palestine. This also applies to the Arab Legion" (ANA,27.1.).

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The future Transjordan attitude with regard to Palestine is still obscure. The Transjordan Premier's statement that "the Transjordan Government will act in conformity with the Arab League's resolutions to oppose Partition" (ANA, 27.1.), is vague and obviously meant for Arab consumption, as it is inconsistent with King Abdullah's declared policy for a Greater Transjordan if not with that for a Greater Syria.

'IRAQ

Saleh Jabr's Cabinet Resigns

The bloody demonstrations which followed the announcement of the signing in London of a new Anglo-'Iraqi treaty, were resumed on a large scale when Saleh Jabr returned to Baghdad from London. These demonstrations, of tens of thousands of people, seem to have been the main factor in the 'Iraqi Cabinet's resignation. Saleh Jabr attempted to the last minute to remain in Government. On the day of his arrival he issued a statement explaining that he has aimed at a revision of the treaty in such a way as to fulfil the country's national aspirations (ANA, 27.1.). As the demonstrations dangerously spread, he asked the Regent to sign a decree enforcing martial law (Misri, 31.1.). He also attempted to justify the new Pact reached with Britain. Secret documents, it was alleged, were shown by the Foreign Office to the 'Iraqi delegation. These documents proved that Russia intends to launch armed attacks during the current year on Greece and Turkey, Iran and the Middle East and on Western Europe (Akhbar al-Yom, 31.1.). It was only when they saw the secret documents that the 'Iraqi delegates approved to sign the proposed treaty providing for joint defence between Britain and 'Iraq (ibid.). With the same purpose in mind the former 'Iraqi Defence Minister also disclosed that Britain had, immediately after the signing of the treaty, supplied 'Iraq with the first consignment of military material as agreed in the new Pact (ibid.). The argument of the Joint Defence Board, invoked by partisans of the Treaty, was in fact the main reason for its rejection by Opposition leaders. An explanatory statement to this effect was issued by the National Democratic Party (left-wing) and published by several Egyptian newspapers.

As a matter of fact the popular movement against the new Treaty has been extremely violent. Despite being machine-gunned by the police, the Baghdad demonstrators armed with sticks and stones, and some firearms set fire to several Government buildings and attempted to reach Saleh Jabr's house. Two Cabinet Ministers, one identified as the Minister of Social Affairs, were fired at but escaped injuries (AP., 27.1.).

When it became apparent that the demonstrations could not be checked, the Regent called a conference of the Premier and other political leaders, following which Saleh Jabr tendered his resignation. Previously the President of the Chamber of Deputies and 34 members of the Chamber resigned in protest to the Government's attitude in dealing with the anti-British demonstrations. The Regent refused to accept their resignation.

The Cabinet resignation was announced in a broadcast by the Regent himself. Baghdad radio played records of 'Iraqi songs of independence and the crowd danced all night in the streets (AP. & R., 27.1.).

The New 'Iraqi Cabinet

The new 'Iraqi Cabinet was formed on the 29th January under the Premiership of Mohammad al-Sadr, a former President of the Senate, who was described as a "moderate". In fact, he is a Shi'ite religious leader, wielding great influence over the fanatical Shi'ite 'Ulema circles. He played a role in the 1920 anti-British riots, but was never much outstanding in the building up of the 'Iraqi state and its political life.

The Cabinet, which has a pronounced right-wing tendency, includes three former Premiers, two members of the Parliamentary opposition and one member of the Istiqlal Party (UP., AP. & R., 29.1.). The ministers are: Foreign Affairs: Hamdi Pachachi, former Prime Minister, considered as extremist. Interior: Jamil Madfa'i, partisan of 'Iraqi-British cooperation, but in opposition to the Nuri Sa'id faction. Defence: Arshad Umari, former Premier and president of the 'Iraqi delegation in San Francisco, known for the cruel suppression of left-wing and Democratic-Liberal groups during his term, 1946. Education: Muhammad Ridha ash-Shebib, leader of the opposition in

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the Chamber of Deputies. Finance: Sadeq el-Bassam, Senate Vice-President. Social Affairs: Najib ar-Rawi, President of the 'Iraqi Bar. Economics: Mustafa el-'Umari; Justice: 'Umar Nazmi. Supply: Muhammad Mahdi Kubbeh, leader of the extreme right-wing Istiqlal party. Communications and Work: Jalal Baban. Ministers without portfolio: Da'ud el-Haidari, Nosrat el-Farisi and Mohammad Habib Chief of the Rabi'a Tribes (Ahram,30.1.). The Cabinet includes neither left-wing elements - National Democrats - nor members of the Liberal Party. Both Parties have made reserves as to their future attitude towards the new Government, as it took no step towards the dissolution of the Chamber. The entire Cabinet was described as a transitional one (Kutla,30.1.) and this was confirmed by the new Premier in a statement to "al-Misri" (see below). Most of the new Ministers, it should be noted have been active on the field of the aid to the Palestine Arabs. The Premier, Mohammad as-Sadr, acted as chairman in the Assembly which denounced the recommendations of the Anglo-American Inquiry Commission in May 1946. He and Hamdi Pachachi, Jamil Madfa'i, Arshad el-'Umari, Sadiq Bassam Ridha ash-Shabibi, Muhammad Mahdi Kubbeh, are all active members of the Committee for the Defence of Palestine, founded in Baghdad in 1946.

In order to quieten public opinion and political parties who had asked for the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies (Kutla,30.1.), it was reported that the Chamber would be closed for two months (Ahram,1.2.). With the same purpose in mind the Minister of Education stated that the children of victims of the demonstrations would be entitled to free education (Ahram,1.2.). From statements made by the new Foreign Affairs Minister (ANA,31.1.) it appears that the Anglo-'Iraqi Treaty signed by Jabr was not to be endorsed by the new Cabinet. However in an interview with "al-Misri", the new Premier stated that his task will be to dissolve the present Chamber of Deputies, to hold new elections preparatory to the constitution of a majority Government "which will enter into negotiations with Britain" (Misri,31.1.).

Referring to Palestine the Foreign Minister stated that the 'Iraqi Government will do its utmost to prevent Partition to become effective (R.,31.1.).

In London, official circles stated that the relations between Britain and 'Iraq were still ruled by the 1930 Treaty concluded for a period of 27 years (AFP,28.1.). It was also admitted that the non ratification by 'Iraq of the new pact has resulted in a setback to Bevin's pro-Arab policy, the more so that the Pact was regarded as the first one of a series of Treaties to be signed with other Arab countries (AFP,28.1.). Another aspect of the surprise was the shaking of the Foreign Minister's reliance on the information passed on him from the Middle East regarding current opinion in Arab countries (Jon Kimche in P.P.,29.1.). Information from the British Embassy in Baghdad and other M.E. sources, J. Kimche added, has assured the F.O. that Britain's stand on the Palestine issue had created a proper climate for treaty discussions. According to the same source a considerable overhaul in the organisation of Britain's information and diplomatic representation in the M.E. appears to be a possible by-product of the 'Iraq fiasco (P.P.,29.1.).

The U.S. State Department was reported to follow with much interest the development of events in 'Iraq (AFP,31.1.). It was also disclosed that the terms of the 'Iraqi treaty were shown before its signing to the U.S. State Department which is said to have urged 'Iraq to accept them (P.P.,29.1.). The Americans are therefore very keen on Britain firmly trying up its relations with the Arab States in such a way as would minimize America's direct commitments, and in that connection A.F.P. (31.1.) points out that Britain, according to the 1930 Treaty, has the right to keep using the airbases of Shu'aiban and Habbaniya. As repercussions on the American stand on Palestine, it was believed that the U.S. would be compelled to reconsider its policy "notwithstanding the big pressure brought by Jews on President Truman" (Misri,31.1.).

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